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ABSTRACT

This case study presents findings from a year-long ethnographic study of a principal at a dilapidated rural elementary school with arid, dusty surroundings. It concludes one of seven studies conducted in elementary and intermediate schools in urban, suburban, and rural settings to investigate the instructional management roles of principals. Although previous research offers disparate viewpoints about the potency of principals as instructional leaders and managers, this series finds that principals can significantly alter their schools' instructional systems and students' social and academic experiences. Using observations of principals' activities and interviews with students and staff, the seemingly chaotic behavior or principals may be construed as purposive. Activities comprise nine categories (goal setting and planning; monitoring; evaluating; communicating; scheduling, allocating resources, and organizing; staffing; modeling; governing; and filling in). The purposes or targets behind principals' activities include work structure, staff relations, student relations, safety and order, plant and equipment, community relations, institutional relations, and institutional ethos. Principal Ray Murdock's routine behaviors involved communicating; monitoring; scheduling, allocating resources, and organizing; governing; and filling in. Murdock's primary target was work structure. Nominated by state education officers for superior instructional leadership, Murdock emerged as a cultural leader who continually imbued staff and students with his beliefs and values about living and learning. (Contains 64 references.) (MLH)

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Instructional Management Program

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Understanding the Principal's Contribution to Instruction: Seven Principals, Seven Stories

Case #3: Ray Murdock, Principal of a Rural Elementary School

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Ginny V. Lee
Bruce G. Barnett
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UNDERSTANDING THE PRINCIPAL'S CONTRIBUTION TO INSTRUCTION:

SEVEN PRINCIPALS, SEVEN STORIES

Case #3:

Ray Murdock,

Principal of a Rural Elementary School

David C. Dwyer
Ginny V. Lee
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ABSTRACT

This case study presents the findings from a yearlong, ethnographic study of a principal of a rural elementary school. It concludes one of a series of studies in elementary and intermediate schools in urban, suburban, and rural settings undertaken to investigate the instructional management role of principals.

Although previous research offers disparate views about the potency of principals as instructional leaders and managers, this series of studies has found that principals can significantly alter the instructional systems of their schools and thereby the social and educative experiences of students.

Through hundreds of hours of observation of principals' activities and through interviews with students, teachers, and principals about the antecedents and consequences of principals' activities, we have construed principals' seemingly chaotic behavior as purposive action. Patterns emerge in the analysis of principals' routine actions that reveal their importance for the creation and maintenance of instructional climates and organizations that are responsive to an array of contextual factors.

FOREWORD

> In the past decade public educators have had to learn how to cope with three kinds of scarcity: pupils, money, and public confidence. Of the three shortages perhaps the most unsettling has been the decline in confidence in a profession that for so long had millennial aspirations of service to the nation. (Tyack & Hansot, 1984, p. 33)

Those of us who care about and watch our schools cannot help but notice that the buildings and the students have changed. We need only listen to the experiences that our children report nightly around the dinner table in order to conclude, not always happily, that things are different today. The media report violence in the schools, poor student achievement, and disappointing facts about the preparation and performance of teachers. And recently, a panel of educational leaders, appointed in 1981 by Secretary of Education Bell, concluded that our schools have deteriorated to such an extent that "our nation is at risk" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

Into this troubled arena--into its very center--the school principal has been thrust by those who have studied "effective" schools (e.g., Armor et al., 1976; Brookover & Lezotte, 1977; Venezky & Winfield, 1979; Weber, 1971; Wynne, 1981). These researchers have successfully resurrected an old maxim: effective principal, effective school. Some proponents of this work have been very explicit about their faith in the capacity of the school principal. One supporter has asserted that:

> One of the most tangible and indispensable characteristics of effective schools is strong administrative leadership, without which the disparate elements of good schooling can neither be brought together nor kept together. (Edmonds, 1979, p. 32)

Thus, school principals find themselves in the spotlight, expected to shoulder successfully the awesome responsibility of school reform.

Is this a fair expectation? While the effective-school researchers have stressed the importance of the principal in the process of school improvement, other investigators have argued that the work of principals is varied, fragmented, and little concerned with the improvement of instruction (Peterson, 1978; Pitner, 1982; Sproull, 1979). Similarly, our own reviews of the effective-schools research have recommended caution about its conclusions (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982; Rowan, Bossert, & Dwyer, 1983). And at the very time that these scholars are proclaiming the potency of the principal as an instructional leader, principals themselves report decreases in their power and autonomy as school leaders. School administrators claim to make fewer decisions regarding instruction at the building level and they express feelings of isolation (Goldhammer, 1971). And as the theoretical debate continues, principals are being held accountable for students' academic performance and achievement scores. In some instances, parent groups are demanding the removal of principals who lead schools where children perform below expectations on standardized achievement tests.

The Instructional Management Program of the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development was created to examine critically the role of the principal in the development and execution of successful instructional programs. We began our work by questioning the common assertions of the effective-schools research. For example, as a basic query, we asked: If successful principals are those who create schools where the climate is safe and orderly, where basic skills are emphasized, where teachers hold high expectations for their students, and where instructional programs are tied closely to carefully monitored objectives, what do principals do to institute and maintain those conditions?

We began our effort to address this question with a careful review of an array of educational and organizational literatures. Subsequently, we suggested a theoretical model that related individual and contextual variables to the behavior of principals, and we speculated about how those behaviors might influence the instructional organization and social climate of a school and, in turn, affect student outcomes (see Bossert et al., 1982).

Guided by our theoretical conception, we then spoke with 32 principals from the San Francisco Bay Area about their work. These long, open-ended interviews produced a wealth of information about the principals' own perceptions of how their behavior as instructional leaders or managers was influenced by their communities, districts, and personal histories. These men and women described their schools' climates and instructional organizations and discussed their efforts to shape the form and the content of instruction and to color the ambience of their schools. From these preliminary forays into the worlds of school administrators, we received a very strong impression: Principals work under diverse conditions and pressures, and they pursue

solutions that affect instruction and student achievement in many different ways.

For us, the public's demand for the improvement of schools and instruction, the ongoing argument about the principal's role, and the promise we saw in the principals' own views about their activities merited an intensive effort to work with principals in their schools. As collaborators, we wanted to gain a realistic understanding of their role and of the limits of their responsibility in attaining more effective schools.

Probing the Workaday World of Principals

As a first step in achieving such an understanding, we invited five of the 32 principals whom we had interviewed to join us in an eight-week pilot study. Our purpose was to observe principals in action, validating their spoken stories on the one hand and gaining direct knowledge of their activities on the other. The five principals represented Blacks and Whites of both sexes from schools with diverse student populations, differing socioeconomic contexts, and varied approaches to instructional management. As we studied these principals, we were able to field-test our primary data-gathering procedures--the shadow and the reflective interview--which were to allow us access to the personal meanings that principals attached to their actions (the design and results of this pilot study are fully discussed in Five Principals in Action: Perspectives on Instructional Management, Dwyer, Lee, Rowan, & Bossert, 1983). Our intent during this phase of our program's work was to listen to how principals described both their role in instruction and the conditions and events shaping that role.

After the pilot phase, we contacted 12 more principals, this time selected from urban, suburban, and rural schools, to help us extend our understanding of instructional leadership and management through a yearlong study of their activities. These individuals had all been nominated as successful principals by their superiors. They varied by gender, age, ethnicity, and experience. Their schools ran the gamut from rural to urban, small to large, poor to rich, traditional to innovative. For hundreds of hours we watched the activities of these principals, looking for the consequences of their actions for teachers and students throughout their schools. (See the companion volume, Methodology, for a thorough treatment of participant selection, data-gathering procedures, and analysis of data).

A Potent Role in Instructional Management

As we watched our experienced principals perform their daily activities, we also witnessed the uncertain environments with which they coped. We saw that the decreases in the number of students, financial resources, and public confidence to which Tyack and Hansot refer did have an effect on schools. In addition, we documented demographic shifts that moved students in

and out of schools at alarming rates; court actions that had administrators, board members, and teachers looking over their shoulders; and a changing political climate that affected the very conception of what schooling might be. All of these were significant factors in the schools in which we worked. The reality is that educators work in shifting environments that are difficult to predict. Further, there is no reason to believe that the conditions contributing to this uncertainty will disappear.

Against this backdrop, the importance of the principal's role and the limitations principals face became apparent. Figure 1 (see page v) illustrates the principal's key position, bridging context and school, policy and program, means and ends. The principal's importance emerges from that position. He or she has the greatest access to the wishes and needs of district leaders, parents and community members, school staff, and students. With experience and training, he or she has the best opportunity to formulate an image of schooling that is relevant and responsive to those groups and to begin to bring that image into being. We believe that this is exactly what our principals were about: Through routine activities they attempted to bring to life their overarching visions, while at the same time monitoring their systems to keep these visions relevant.

Our principals demonstrated their abilities to tap the wishes and resources of their communities and districts. We observed their capacities to be sensitive to the needs of their students and staffs. But what we found most impressive was their ability to create and sustain an image of what quality schooling might be. Through all of the uncertainty and conflict that characterized their environments, these principals worked to instill their visions in their staffs and patrons, defining a mission in which all might participate. We believe that this may be their most potent role.

Seven Principals, Seven Stories

From our yearlong study of the activities of principals in their schools, we have prepared seven case studies. Each study portrays how the principal is influenced by his or her context. Each study also describes how the principal set about improving or maintaining the instructional program in his or her school. Together, the studies demonstrate the complexities and subtleties of the principal's role. This series contains the stories of:

1. Emma Winston, Principal of an Inner-City Elementary School;

2. Frances Hedges, Principal of an Urban Elementary School;

3. Ray Murdock, Principal of a Rural Elementary School;

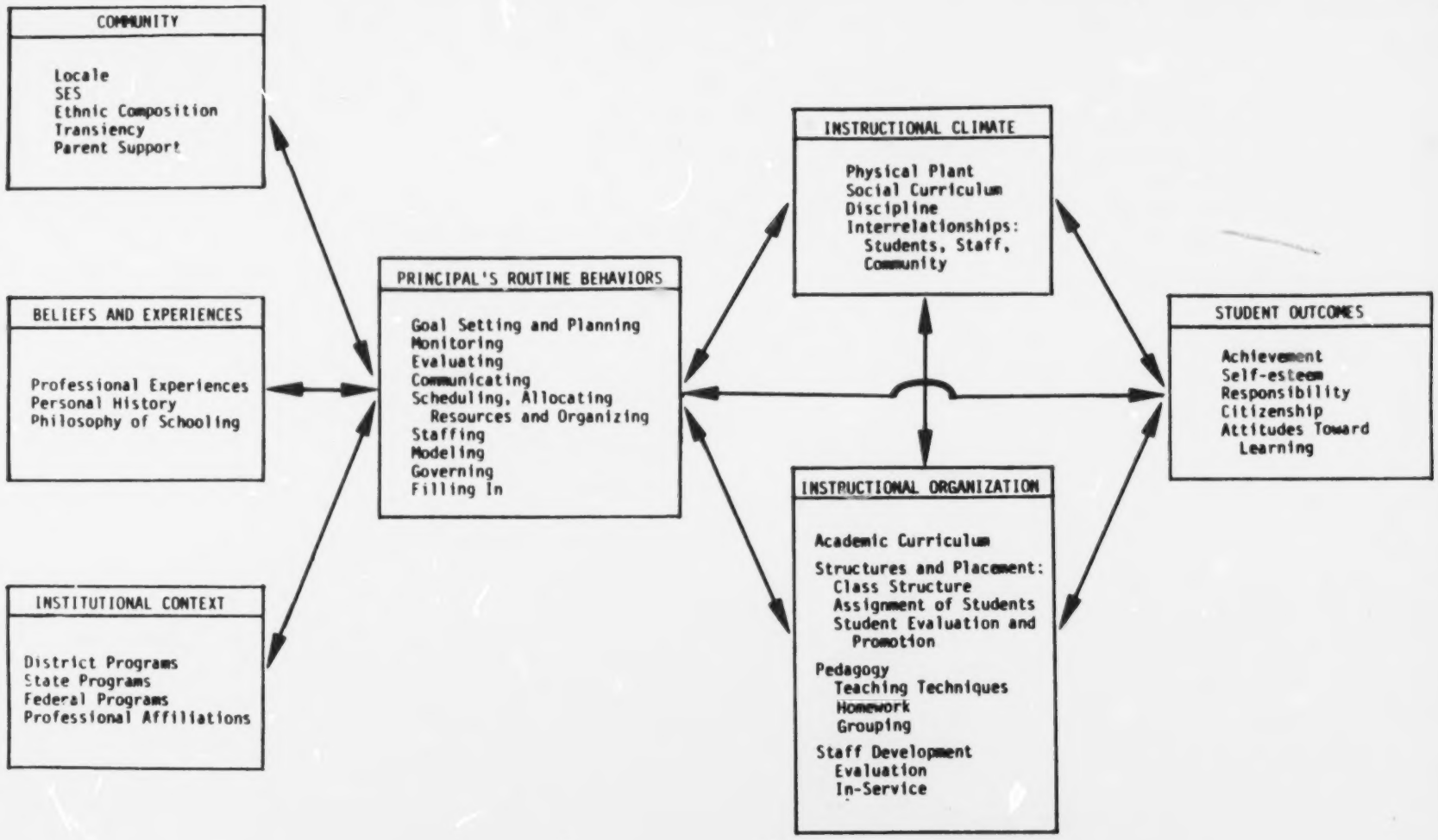

Figure 1: The Principal's Role in Instructional Management

Principals can understand and influence the varied elements of their organizations through the performance of routine activities. Their success hinges on their ability to connect their actions to an overarching perspective of their school settings and their aspirations for students.

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4. Grace Lancaster, Principal of an Urban Junior High School;

5. Jonathan Rolf, Principal of a Suburban Elementary School;

6. Florence Barnhart, Principal of an Inner-City Junior High School;

7. Louis Wilkens, Principal of a Suburban Elementary School.

These principals were chosen because of their outstanding reputations and their willingness and their staffs' willingness to work for a year under the close scrutiny of our field workers. We were able to learn about instructional leadership and management from each of them, although their contributions to instruction differed markedly. Some were directly involved with setting the conditions <u>of</u> instruction--that is, working with their staffs to define and coordinate the what, when, where, and how of instruction. The contributions of others were more circuitous or behind the scenes. From those principals, we were able to understand better how some principals can set the conditions <u>for</u> instruction, providing school environments that are supportive of teachers' work and students' learning.

It is important to note, however, that none of these principals is a superhero. Each man and woman made significant contributions in the context of his or her own school, but each carried the foibles and idiosyncrasies that in some form burden us all. Each struggled with the day-to-day realities of his or her own limitations--personal and contextual. The stories will elicit strong feelings within their readers about the relative merit of these principals' actions. Readers will compare one principal to another and, more importantly, to themselves. And therein lies the relevance of these studies.

These cases are not presented as models for others to emulate; on the contrary, they are intended to stimulate personal reflection and to illustrate several lessons that we learned from the hundreds of hours we spent with these men and women and from our own comparisons of their work:

1. **Successful principals act with purpose.** They have an image in mind of the "good" school and of a way to make their school more like that image. They use this overarching perspective as a guide for their actions.

2. **Successful principals have a multi-faceted image of schools.** They recognize that schools comprise many interrelated social and technical elements--from community concerns and district mandates to student/staff relations and instructional strategies. Successful principals stand at the vortex of these

sometimes competing elements, balancing and guiding their organizations toward their goals.

3. **Successful principals use routine behaviors to progress incrementally toward their goals.** Principals are busy people doing many things simultaneously. They design their routines to achieve their purposes. They work smarter, not harder.

4. **The IMP Framework, as it has evolved through the field work, illustrates these conclusions about successful principals.** This framework, shown in Figure 1, provides a useful heuristic device to help people understand the role of the principal.

5. **All principals engage in the same kinds of behavior.** The verbs listed in the "routine behaviors" box of Figure 1 were common to all the principals studied. Furthermore, these routine behaviors were used with similar frequency. Communication accounted for the largest proportion of each principal's actions.

6. **The form and function of principals' routine behaviors varies to suit their contexts and purposes.** Despite the similarity in the categories and frequency of principals' routine behaviors, the variation in their actions becomes apparent when principals are observed at work in their schools. The case studies illustrate this principle in detail, leading to the premise that there is no single image or simple formula for successful instructional leadership.

We believe that researchers, practicing principals, and educators planning futures in school administration will find these volumes provocative.

Although the cases portray seven unique stories, we have chosen to structure them along parallel lines to encourage readers to compare and contrast contextual antecedents, principals' actions, and consequences across them. Each will begin with an orientation to the setting, which describes the school, community, patrons, school staff, and principal. The introduction concludes with a narrative of a day in the life of the principal, enlivening the descriptive information about the school by illustrating how the principal deals with typical situations in his/her setting.

The second section of each study begins by delineating the social and academic goals held by the principal and staff in the school, then describes the elements of the instructional climate and instructional organization that have been created to accomplish those goals. Throughout this section, the role of the principal is underscored by the words of teachers and students from the setting, by the principal's own words, and by the observations of the field researcher assigned to the school.

The final section of each study analyzes the principal's activities, drawing information from the descriptive sections to build and support models that explain the direct and indirect strategies and actions employed by the principals to affect instruction in their schools.

One last note: We are aware of the long-standing debate about whether principals are best described as middle-level managers, coordinating people, materials, and time to meet their institutions' goals, or whether principals are best construed as leaders, wearing the lenses of their own experiences and values, sharing their visions of means and ends, and enlisting support to accomplish their goals. From our experiences with principals, we do not feel that the leader/manager distinction helps us better understand their work. We saw our principals act sometimes like leaders, sometimes like managers; many times, however, we could attribute either role to their actions. Reflecting the overlapping nature of these role distinctions in the day-to-day actions of principals, we use the words interchangeably throughout these studies.

Acknowledgements

There is a multitude of people to thank for their contributions to this extensive study. The principals, staffs, and students who freely gave their energy, graciously tolerated our presence, and patiently answered our questions over the period of a school year are first and foremost on this list. Our agreement to protect their anonymity, however, prevents us from listing these important contributors by name (all proper names used in the case studies are fictional). It is self-evident that the project would not have been possible without their goodwill and their sense of responsibility to our efforts.

Next, 11 research interns in three states spent over 1,500 hours in these schools. They trained and prepared for each phase of data-gathering, relentlessly applied each procedure, and performed the necessary and painstaking documentation procedures after each of their school visits and observations. All of the interns were graduate students who had to weave our program's research activities into their already crowded personal agendas. Alphabetically, they were: Bracha Rubinek Alpert, Steven Foster, Susan Goodwin, Albert Kuipers, Patricia Kunke, Maralee Mayberry, Barbara McEvoy, Gail Mladejovesky, Susana Munzell, Sherri Schulke, and John Wilson. The twelfth field researcher was Ginny Lee, a research associate of the Instructional Management Program, who wore multiple hats throughout the project, including site coordinator, writer/editor, and planning and training assistant.

An extremely competent secretarial staff, which included Sharon Hansen, Peter Grace, Ann Wallgren, Carrie Kojimoto, and Claudia Long, monitored and filed data, made sure that interns kept up with the necessary bureaucratic work, and transcribed--

painfully--a seemingly endless stream of interviews. The program would have floundered early on without their consistent support.

As the project's field phase was completed, several staff members took on new roles and additional staff joined the program to assist with the development of the computerized data base, analysis, writing, and/or final document preparation. Christine Baker, Jean Barker, Carrie Kojimoto, Claudia Long, Jeannie Lum, Barbara McEvoy, and Patricia Terry read and re-read hundreds of pages of data, assisted in the development of our tagging scheme, and entered text data into the computer system implemented by Patricia Terry. Bracha Rubinek Alpert, Jean Barker, Carrie Kojimoto, Claudia Long, Jeannie Lum, Barbara McEvoy, and Patricia Terry made invaluable contributions in the preliminary phases of the writing of the case studies. In the last critical phase, Jean Barker and Kenneth Warren wrote final copy and oversaw production of the eight-volume set.

My colleagues, Bruce Barnett, Steven Bossert, Nikola Filby, Ginny Lee, and Brian Rowan each contributed their expertise to the design and implementation of these studies. They, in conjunction with Carrie Kojimoto, assumed major analytical and writing tasks as our ambitions to fully utilize the rich data set grew and grew.

Lastly, the National Institute of Education funded this study during an era of tight resources, supported the program's efforts throughout, and helped create the visibility and professional networks that will ensure the use of this project's findings. Michael Cohen and Marianne Amarel were the project's monitors, and we especially thank them for understanding the utility of this kind of in-depth study and for supporting the project during every phase of its development.

David C. Dwyer
Project Director

CONTENTS

Foreword.....i

Section 1: An Introduction to the Setting and Its Actors.....1

An Overview.....1

The School and Its Context.....1

Jefferson's Students and Parents.....5

Jefferson's Staff.....7

Jefferson's Principal.....8

A Day in the Life of Ray Murdock.....11

Summary.....16

Section 2: The Principal and the Instructional System of the School.....17

Jefferson's Social and Academic Goals.....18

Social Goals.....19
Academic Goals.....21
Summary.....23

Jefferson's Instructional Climate.....24

Physical Components.....24
Social Curriculum.....28
Discipline.....33
Interrelationships.....39
Summary.....43

Jefferson's Instructional Organization.....45

The Content of Instruction.....45
Structures and Placement.....50
Pedagogy.....53
Staff Development.....60

Summary: Jefferson's School Ethos.....64

Section 3: Patterns and Processes in the Principal's Role as Instructional Leader.....69

Finding Instructional Leadership in Principals' Routine Actions.....69

Murdock's Enactment of Instructional Leadership.....74

Establishing the Instructional Climate.....83
Establishing the Instructional Organization.....85

Conclusion.....88

References.....89

FIGURES

Figure 1: The Principal's Role in Instructional Management.....v

Figure 2: Student Ethnicity at Jefferson.....4

Figure 3: Employment Skill Level of Jefferson's Parents.....5

Figure 4: Years of Teaching Experience of Jefferson's Staff....6

Figure 5: Distribution of Principal Murdock's Routine Behaviors.....76

Figure 6: Distribution of Principal Murdock's Routine Actions: Communicating.....78

Figure 7: Distribution of Principal Murdock's Routine Actions: Monitoring.....79

Figure 8: Distribution of Principal Murdock's Routine Actions: Scheduling, Allocating Resources, and Organizing.....80

Figure 9: Distribution of Principal Murdock's Routine Actions: Governing.....81

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SETTING AND ITS ACTORS

An Overview

The first section of this study attempts to give the reader a general impression of Jefferson Elementary School and its context. We believe that this narrative introduction is necessary if the reader is to understand fully the description and analysis of the instructional system presented in the subsequent section of the study. The introduction itself begins with an account of the physical characteristics of the school and the surrounding community. This account is followed by a description of the school's parents and students. Next, the general characteristics of the school's teachers are delineated. The focus then turns to the school's principal, telling in brief his history, his educational philosophy, and his thoughts about the role of a principal. Having shaded in these broader contours, we subsequently take the reader through a day in the life of the principal, recounting in as much detail as possible what he encountered during a typical day at school.

The School and Its Context

Some 20 years ago, bulldozers flattened the top of a knoll just a few miles outside the small town of Bradstone to create a site for Jefferson Elementary School. A horseshoe-shaped cinder block building was then erected upon the gravel and dirt lot, and coated with a yellow paint that harmonized with the semi-desert surroundings. This rather nondescript structure was to be the home of Jefferson Elementary School, intended to serve a stable, predominately wealthy farming community located about 33 miles from the larger city of Herder.

Over the next two decades, however, the school and the community changed significantly. Increased business investments and the rapid development of the hotel/resort industry in Herder transformed Bradstone from a farming town into a "bedroom" community for the larger city. The wealthy farm residents soon found themselves accommodating a largely transient, low-income population of former Herder residents who could no longer afford to own a home or raise a family in Herder. These families looked to Bradstone as a haven for temporary housing and low-cost services while they sought more permanent employment elsewhere. Their transiency made them more reluctant to support school taxes and bond issues, creating a problem that plagued Jefferson

Elementary School into the 1980s. Speaking in 1983, Ray Murdock, the school's principal of 16 years, identified increasing community support for public education financing as one of his primary functions (SO, 3/4/83, p. 4).*

The school facility itself underwent physical changes during the same period. In the original building, the windowless classrooms sat back-to-back like rows of block cells. Each was separated from its neighbor by a shared rest room facility. Entrances were located in a single outer wall, and sidewalks bordered the building, which was otherwise surrounded by dirt grounds. The building's mostly bare hallways, which also lacked windows, seemed desolate.

Then nine years after the school's construction, a small brick building, known as the "open concepts" learning center, was added to the main building, altering the structure's shape from a horseshoe to a lower-case "h." This new building housed three third-grade classes, one kindergarten class, the speech therapist's office, and the Chapter 1 teacher's office. Designed during the early 1970s when the open-classroom approach to learning was popular throughout the country, the new addition contrasted markedly with the older main building.

In the new building, no walls separated the classrooms. Instead, teachers used bookshelves, posterboards, and tables to give their rooms some sense of enclosure. All of the walls had windows, and all of the floors were carpeted. Only the speech therapist's office and the Chapter 1 teacher's office were clearly separated from the instructional areas. The vibrant atmosphere of the new structure made it difficult to believe that both buildings belonged to the same school.

Both, however, shared some characteristics. The arid weather had quickly faded the yellow paint of both buildings, making each as bland as the other. Except for the school's name painted in blue on an outer wall, the entire complex, which also included the local intermediate school, could have been overlooked as just

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*Throughout these sections, the reader will encounter parenthetic notations describing the type of data cited, the date of collection, and the page number of the record from which the quotation was taken. The abbreviations used to identify the data types are: FN for field notes; SO for summary observations; TI for tape-recorded interviews; I for interviews that were not transcribed verbatim; IOI for Instructional Organization Instrument; SDI for School Description Instrument; SFI for School Features Inventory; and Doc. for documents that were produced within the broad instructional system in which each school was embedded. (For further explanation of these varied data, see the companion volume, Methodology.) For example, a quotation taken from an interview on October 8, 1982, would be followed by: (TI, 10/8/82, p. 34).

another state services institution marked by an American flag at the center of its entrance way. The surrounding grounds were barren. A patch of grass in front of the school and sagebrush scattered here and there provided the only color. A dirt playground extended from the rear of the main building to the right leg of the "h." Two swing sets, two tetherball poles, and three rather faded spring-horses made up the only play equipment. A wire-mesh fence, typical of most schools in the state, surrounded the play area.

To the eyes of most observers, the school's grounds offered little to boast about. But to Ray Murdock, Jefferson's principal, each structure was a positive sign. Remembering the days when the school had no playground equipment at all, Murdock pointed to each addition as evidence of growth and improvement.

Examples of Murdock's positive attitude were also present inside the austere old building. Two posters on the main office walls proclaimed Murdock's educational philosophy. The first, picturing a boy and a girl, hung near a large freshwater aquarium of colorful fish. It read:

> I am only one, but I am one. I can't do everything, but I can do something. What I can do I will do. (FN, 3/4/83, p. 2)

The second, strategically placed above the wall clock, warned that

> the most deadly of all sins is the mutilation of a child's spirit. (SO, 3/4/83, p. 3)

As these slogans indicate, Murdock did not allow the sterility of the school's surroundings to characterize his philosophy or his educational approach. Indeed, when one looked closely at the old building, one found many signs of life amid apparent desolation. Decorating Murdock's office were colorful charts for the reading and math management programs, a display of several American flags, and a collection of photographs of Murdock's college football team. On the walls just outside the office, posters announced upcoming local and school events. One advertised a "Read-a-Thon" sponsored by Burger King. Not far from the poster, arrangements of children's work enlivened a newly installed bookcase.

Across the hallway from the main office was the media center where curriculum materials were stored. These were catalogued systematically. A card file in the room registered each student and noted his or her abilities and deficiencies. The file helped teachers to find materials appropriate to the needs of their students (FN, 2/3/83, p. 6). Teachers could also check out audiovisual equipment for use in the classroom, or they could bring their students to the center to use one or both of the school's enlargers in the fully equipped darkroom.

Also in the building were the library, cafeteria, music room, nurse's office, and counselor's office. The cafeteria, clean and modern in appearance, had been renovated recently to include plenty of storage space. Though lacking a performance stage, it doubled as the main auditorium. Two large, colorful murals, depicting the scenic landscape of the state, tempered the atmosphere of vacancy that would otherwise have been created by the room's high ceiling.

Of greater importance, as a symbol of the school's status at the district level, was Jefferson's music room. The room provided space for band rehearsal, but most significantly, it was home to the only elementary school choral music program in the district. Murdock's ability to implement programs such as this led to a general consensus among Jefferson's teachers that the school was looked upon favorably by the district. One teacher, commenting on Murdock's relationship with district officials, said, "They listen to him when he wants something" (SO, 5/12/83, p. 2).

As, apparently, did the parents. They not only participated en·masse in the school's PTA, but through the PTA they had provided most, if not all, of Jefferson's playground equipment, display cases, and classroom equipment. Their support resulted from a favorable opinion of the school's program. A parent-opinion survey conducted at the end of the 1983 school year (40% response rate) indicated positive "agreement" and "strong agreement" in all categories assessing the school's effective functioning (SO, 6/4/83, p. 1).

As these examples indicate, despite the economic problems affecting the Bradstone community and district schools in recent years, Jefferson was perceived as a successful elementary school by district officials and Bradstone residents.

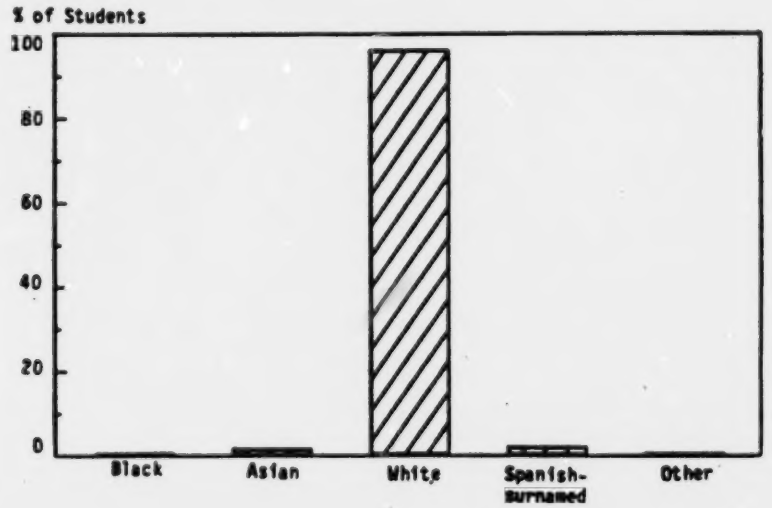

Figure 2: Student Ethnicity at Jefferson

Jefferson's Students and Parents

Eighteen classrooms provided for the 410 students enrolled at Jefferson. The majority of the student population (96%) was White, its racial composition reflecting that of the state's general population; the remainder was 2% Spanish-surnamed, 1.5% Asian, and 0.5% Black or other nationality (see Figure 2 above).

It was not unusual for any of these students to be enrolled one month and withdrawn the next. Their parents were often employed in seasonal, part-time, or short-term positions, and would move out of Bradstone as soon as a better job became available elsewhere. As a result, the yearly student turnover rate averaged 35%. As one might expect, transiency was associated with a lower socioeconomic status. Many parents worked as cocktail waitresses, hotel clerks, and the like. According to Murdock's estimates, only 5% of the school's parents could be labeled as professionally employed. He identified 15% as semiprofessional, 40% as skilled and semiskilled, and 20% as unskilled. The rest were unknown (see Figure 3 below). Students' dress ranged from the stylish to the unkempt, attesting to these family economic differences. All of these factors created what Murdock called the "specialized needs" of many of the students. In response he had developed a number of programs to combat problems brought on by the high rate of transiency (I, 3/4/83, p. 4).

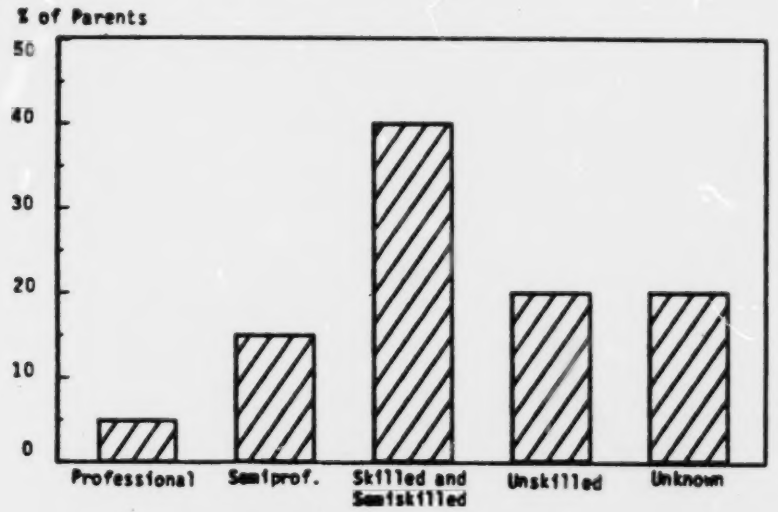

Figure 3: Employment Skill Level of Jefferson's Parents

Thus, despite the trials of coping with a constantly changing array of peers, students were, overall, active and energetic--highly animated in their play during recess periods, yet respectful and attentive during class time. Many commented that Murdock had made the school a fun place to be. They often saw

him in the cafeteria, at the bus stop, on the playground, and in the hallways, usually receiving a greeting from him as they passed. Students especially enjoyed the special events held throughout the year. Even those with behavioral problems saw Murdock in a positive light, commenting that he "helps me not get in bad fights" (TI, 5/16/83, p. 3), "helps me learn that this [fighting] is not good" (TI, 5/23/83, p. 4), or "helps me learn math" (TI, 5/23/83, p. 3).

Jefferson's parents were also actively involved with Murdock. The school's PTA had a 100% membership rate with between 300 to 400 parents regularly attending meetings and organizing events. But this high level of involvement had not materialized of its own accord. The principal and staff spent a lot of time and energy attempting to include parents in school affairs and to interest them in their children's education. They held frequent parent/teacher conferences, and following Murdock's lead, they adopted a philosophy that parents should be regarded as friends rather than as casual acquaintances. According to the PTA president, this "cooperation between the principal and the teachers" began to pay off four or five years ago (SO, 6/8/83, p. 6). Parent involvement in school events increased, and the staff/parent relationship became more lively and positive (FN, 6/8/83, p. 6). Another result was that the school could count on a crowd of 250 to 350 people to attend the annual student art show held in the cafeteria.

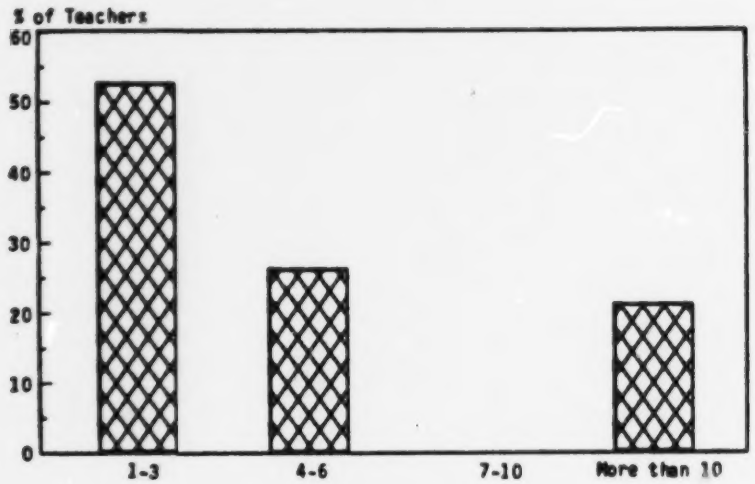

Figure 4: Years of Teaching Experience of Jefferson's Staff

Jefferson's Staff

Jefferson employed 15 full-time and one half-time grade level teachers. This total included one full-time and one half-time kindergarten teachers, three first-grade teachers, three second-grade teachers, three third-grade teachers, two fourth-grade teachers, and three fifth-grade teachers. Ten of Jefferson's teachers had from one to three years of experience. Five had been employed four to six years. The remaining four had been teaching for more than ten years (see Figure 4 above).

Four part-time specialists were also on staff: a counselor, a speech therapist, a nurse, and a band instructor. Rounding out the teaching staff were three additional full-time teachers in music, special education, and the Chapter 1 program. Finally, there were four aides: a media clerk (full-time), a library aide (half-time), a Chapter 1 aide (full-time), and a special education aide (full-time); and five full-time classified school personnel, including a secretary, a maintenance person, and three custodians.

All but two of the teachers at Jefferson had been hired by Murdock himself. In fact, during his first year at Jefferson, Murdock hired 10 new teachers. Thus, by and large, the staff's philosophy reflected Murdock's views. Speaking about the students, one staff member commented:

> My main goal is probably to make them feel secure and good about school before any academics are thought about; I try to make them feel good about being here and comfortable and feel like they can make their own decisions and stuff. (TI, 5/18/83, p. 1)

This viewpoint almost exactly echoed Murdock's, which began with the premise that students "must like being in school" and should be treated as individuals (I, 3/4/83, pp. 3-6).

Staff comments about students were overwhelmingly positive. Even though teachers did identify problem students, they never discussed student personalities or family backgrounds in a negative manner. Rather than spending time talking about these students, teachers focused on how to help them. One result of this attitude was that the usual "teachers' room gossip" and disgruntled criticism about the school were noticeably absent.

Yet, although the teachers viewed themselves as a cohesive unit, individuals could find space for differences of opinion. Recently, the school had initiated a new language program. Though most of the teachers strongly supported the program, several remained skeptical about its use. In the opinion of one of these teachers, the staff may have acted too hastily in implementing the program. But the disagreement did not occasion a major rift. Skeptical teachers were allowed to observe the program in action before deciding whether to try it or not.

Their reservations did not cause problems with the rest of the staff, nor did they lead to the formation of a clique or a subgroup (I, 5/12/83, p. 1).

The staff's consistently positive attitude about the school cannot be emphasized enough. Jefferson's teachers were firmly committed to individually educating each student to his or her highest potential. Instilling in each student a positive self-image and a good attitude about school was as important as teaching the "basics." Nor should Murdock's influence in this endeavor be underestimated. His teachers respected him a great deal because he allowed them freedom to achieve these goals. In the words of one teacher:

> He's supportive of all of us. He does support us in our discipline and our program. You know, he backs us all the way. (I, 5/19/83, p. 1)

This opportunity for teachers to put their own ideas and professional opinions into use increased staff confidence and created a school environment of which the staff was extremely proud.

Jefferson's Principal

"Children Learn What They Live," begins Jefferson's Teachers' Handbook, which was compiled by Principal Ray Murdock. Murdock was 49 years old, but seemed much younger, and would be reckoned, by all conventional standards, a distinguished-looking man. His quick smile and penetrating, sparkling blue eyes immediately put those around him at ease.

He often treated new acquaintances to tales of his personal experiences, or he would launch into a description of his hobbies, which included aviation. Sometimes, as he did so, he took from his wallet photos of his children or a picture of his airplane. He maintained this relaxed, confident attitude whether conversing with the cooks, doing paperwork in his office, conducting staff meetings, or talking to the district supervisor over the phone.

But Murdock's friendly, casual manner did not develop naturally from his background. He grew up in what he described as a strict family. He spent his younger life traveling from job site to job site with his father, who was a construction worker. During his high school years, he lived on a farm in the southeastern United States. Emphasizing the value of this experience, he said:

> I am glad and proud that I grew up as I did on a farm because it's taught me a certain independence that a lot of people don't know. (I, 3/4/83, p. 1)

He came to believe that a strict, inflexible approach to life was best. And this way of looking at the world was to remain with Murdock for years to come.

After high school, he entered a state teachers college on a football scholarship without "realizing what I was getting into" (I, 3/4/83, p. 1). He then developed an interest in industrial arts and manual training. Discovering that teachers in these areas were in great demand around the country, he finally decided to "give teaching a shot" (I, 3/4/83, p. 1).

His decision, though, did not amount to a change in his world view. Further augmenting a tendency toward inflexibility was his service in the United States Marine Corps. He spent six months in basic training, 25 months on active duty, and some 16 years on reserve duty with a company stationed at Herder. Murdock explained the military's influence on him in this way:

> If you are going to be placed in a combat situation, you can't be debating as to whether or not you want to do something. . . . There comes a time when you have to put the bit in the mouth and say this is the way it's got to be. (I, 3/4/83, p. 5)

Thus, his early years of teaching were more a continuation of, rather than a departure from, the past. The first year, he taught industrial arts at a predominately ethnic high school. During the next 10 years, he stayed with industrial arts but moved on to different junior and senior high schools.

Finally, however, he decided that he needed something more challenging. Bored with the mechanical nature of teaching drafting and woodshop, and tired of working two and three jobs at a time in order to support a family, he realized that school administrative positions offered more variety and paid higher salaries. So he returned to school for his master's degree in education. Shortly after graduation he became vice-principal of Jefferson Elementary School. One year later he was promoted to principal.

The change in job status marked another change. During the early 1960s, Murdock began to reflect upon some of his attitudes about life. The discipline he had learned from the military was still important, but he discovered its limitations:

> When you get out into real life, and people don't come from that same frame of thought, then you have to deal more with personalities than you did there. . . . And being rigid, as rigid as I was, just simply isn't acceptable. (I, 3/4/83, p. 5)

He then spent a lot of time thinking and reading, as he worked out a more humanistic and individualized approach to people--an

approach that still maintained some of the firmness of his early training.

A result of this soul-searching was an ability to lead, tempered by a concern for people. He could make decisions when necessary and, at the same time, allow others to pursue their own goals. Murdock attributed his effectiveness to this "happy medium" (I, 3/4/83, p. 5). And his educational philosophy and leadership style were direct outgrowths of this compromise.

First and foremost, his leadership extended beyond the school's walls. Murdock believed that schools were "the hope of the country," and that, as such, they deserved financial support (TI, 3/4/83, p. 9). Consequently, much of his time and energy were devoted to finding ways of increasing funding for public education. He was actively involved in the state legislature and served as a main spokesman for bills to increase educational spending. He augmented these efforts by rallying the local community to support these bills.

His success at the local level stemmed from his belief that to be effective he must be involved with everyone--teachers, students, and parents. He described his staff as a "team," and himself as one of the "team members." He opposed the practice of "asking people to do something that you won't do yourself":

> I don't mind getting in there and mixing it all up at all. . . . That causes me to be close to those people. I do the same kind of work they do. The fact that I have a master's degree and all this experience doesn't set me aloof at all. I'm a regular person from the word go, and I like the idea of being right in there and rubbing elbows with the workers. (I, 3/15/83, p. 12)

On a typical day, one might find Murdock working in the cafeteria serving line, monitoring daily ping-pong and tetherball tournaments, or supervising the bus loading zone.

Jefferson's teachers responded well to Murdock's team approach. Those who preferred "open" instructional styles structured their classes accordingly. Teachers with more traditional leanings taught in a way that was comfortable for them. Describing Murdock as "flexible," "supportive," and "positive," they appreciated his willingness to give them the responsibility to do what they felt was best. In the words of one staff member:

> He [Murdock] trusts the teachers and treats them as professionals. (I, 6/14/83 p. 1)

Teachers also believed that Murdock's trust improved their own ability to teach. Another staff member observed that because

Murdock had a great deal of confidence in his teachers, they in return were motivated to do a better job (I, 5/19/83, p. 1).

Murdock's method was also efficient. The day's end often found him, having completed all his tasks, with enough time and good humor to joke with the office staff. Or sometimes he used the extra time to stay in shape. He made a point to jog or bicycle as often as possible. And on afternoons when no staff meetings were scheduled, one could often see him putting in a few laps around the school track.

A Day in the Life of Ray Murdock

Principal Ray Murdock had developed a style of management that, in his opinion, brought to life his vision of what a school should be within the context of Jefferson Elementary School and the Bradstone community. Some of the salient features of that context were: a high student transiency rate, an ethnically homogeneous student population, and a lack of funds to support a strong instructional program. This section presents a typical day for Murdock at Jefferson as seen through the eyes of an observer who attempted to record only those incidents directly involving the principal. The "day" as it appears here is in reality a composite, made up of segments drawn from several different days. The incidents, however, are representative and create a vivid and accurate impression of life at Jefferson. This close-up view describes Murdock's interactions with students, staff, and parents, and it also illustrates how political, demographic, and financial factors influenced the actions of Jefferson's principal.

When school began at 8:30 a.m., Jefferson students were greeted by the voice of their principal, Ray Murdock, on the intercom, announcing that baseball burgers would be today's lunch entree. Jefferson's was the district's only financially self-supporting lunch program, and Murdock was happy to help out by announcing the lunch menu. Murdock then told students that tomorrow would be report card and picture day, and he concluded his remarks with "Have a nice day."

After finishing the morning announcements, Murdock visited the cafeteria kitchen to bid good morning to each cook. The visit was part of his daily routine. He was proud of the cafeteria's success, and he often joked and chatted with the staff. Staying only a short while in the cafeteria, Murdock returned to his office to work on the school budget.

He had been at work only a few minutes when the secretary entered his office to tell him there might be a problem with the substitute teacher she had assigned to the special education class for tomorrow. Interruptions of this kind were common for Murdock; as he was talking to the secretary, Rosalind, the regular special education teacher, stormed into the office. Without greeting the principal, she stood very close to him and declared, "I don't want that substitute in my classroom!" The

proposed substitute had a reputation for constantly complaining and for talking behind other teachers' backs. Murdock thanked Rosalind for letting him know about this problem and assured her he would be carefully monitoring the situation. He also said that since the substitute had been scheduled for that class, he would not cancel the assignment but would have a conference with her when she arrived at Jefferson.

Murdock next took a phone call from a father who had received a notice that his son might be retained for missing 30 school days. The principal explained the district policy and informed the father that a team made up of the boy's teacher and counselor would monitor and re-evaluate the situation to determine whether the boy should graduate at the end of the year. He encouraged the father to keep in touch for an update on his son's progress.

The custodian came into Murdock's office to consult with him about ordering scrubbing and polishing pads for the floor cleaner and a pipe for the blowtorch. The blowtorch was broken, but rather than buying a new one, Murdock had recommended adapting the old one, thereby saving the school $200. As a rural school principal, Murdock often faced situations that called on his knowledge of plant maintenance. The custodian routinely solicited the principal's advice about ordering new equipment. Their conversation was sprinkled with technical jargon, indicating the principal's expertise.

Before the custodian left, Murdock told him that the school maintenance staff needed to improve its cleanup of rest rooms and of the yard in front of Jefferson. Then the principal phoned the Electrolux vacuum cleaner dealer about an appropriate sweeping unit for the school. Murdock was concerned with maintaining a pleasant physical climate at Jefferson, but he had to contend with the dust and mud that students tracked onto the carpets from the dirt playground. He arranged for a demonstration of the sweeper and hung up the phone.

The music teacher, Cyndy, poked her head in Murdock's office and requested that he drop by her classroom when he had a spare moment. Beatrice, one of the cooks, then came in to give Murdock some information about a conference the kitchen staff would be attending in Arizona in two weeks. They discussed the different seminars each cook would attend. At 10:35, Murdock walked back to the cafeteria with Beatrice to have brunch with the cooks. He seemed relaxed and in good humor as he exchanged stories about his airplane and the upcoming conference. Murdock, with a twinkle in his penetrating blue eyes, asked one female cook, "When are we going dancing?" In this school, where staff and principal often socialized in the evenings, Murdock's inquiry might very well have been taken at least half seriously.

On his way back to the office, Murdock stopped by the music room, where Cyndy directed him toward the piano. Apparently someone had tampered with the cover, causing it to close improperly. Murdock examined it and repaired the keyboard latch

cover. As he worked, he and Cyndy talked over next year's scheduling of the music classes and agreed that the advisory council should organize it.

He returned to his office at 11 o'clock and resumed his budget paperwork. A fifth-grade boy came in and asked where the photography class met. The principal walked out to the hallway and pointed toward the appropriate door. Seeing another boy standing hesitantly in the main office, Murdock said in a friendly voice, "Hi, Tiger, what's up?" The boy said he needed help on a math homework assignment. The principal gestured with his hand and motioned the boy to sit down with him at the small table at the end of his desk. Murdock gave the boy clues designed to guide him through the problem-solving process and responded with much encouragement when the boy figured out the correct answer.

Murdock walked with the boy to the door, but another phone call brought him back to his desk. His face lit up with a big smile upon hearing that a PTA lifetime service pin was to be awarded to a woman he knew. "That's great!" he exclaimed. "Nobody deserves it more."

Students began arriving for lunch at the cafeteria at 11:15, and Murdock walked quickly to the lunchroom to help out. Standing behind the serving line, he put on a plastic serving glove and began placing a handful of french fries on each plate. The principal assisted with the serving in some fashion each day. It was clear from the banter between himself and the cooks that Murdock enjoyed this part of his job. He also talked freely with the students.

A ping-pong tournament was being held this week, and Murdock took the opportunity to be with the students. After his lunchroom stint, he went to the hallway to check that the tables had been properly set up. The competing students filed into the hallway and stood against the wall. Murdock organized them into teams and assigned them to tables. As play began, he walked from table to table, joking with the students and checking that they were playing and keeping score correctly.

When Murdock returned to the office at 12:30 p.m., he found a teacher and a student waiting for him. According to the teacher, the boy, Joey, had been throwing rocks on the playground. Sternly, Murdock instructed Joey to stand against the wall. He drew an imaginary square around Joey and told him he was not to move out of the square.

Fifteen minutes later, Joey was allowed to leave the square and directed to stand right next to the principal's desk. His head hung down, and speaking in a barely audible voice, Joey said, "I am very, very sorry." Murdock responded, "Will you be sorry when you put another student's eye out with a rock?" Again, Joey said, "I am very sorry." Murdock stood up and removed a large, black book from his shelf. The book was a

record of the number of disciplinary incidents each student had been involved in.

Murdock was interrupted by a teacher who came into the office to notify him about two junior high school students playing tag in the open concepts room. At Murdock's request, they were sent into his office. One of the boys began speaking immediately, but the principal, in a forceful voice, interrupted him: "You weren't talked to!" Then each boy was asked to give his excuse, and both replied that a group of kids had been playing tag. Murdock collected the names of the other students and phoned the intermediate school principal to inform her of the incident. He sent the students back to her with the list of students.

Meanwhile, Joey, the boy who was caught throwing rocks, remained standing silently beside Murdock's desk. The records revealed that Joey was a repeat offender--this was not the first time he had been to the principal's office for throwing rocks. Murdock asked Joey for his home phone number and then asked, "Do you know what will happen if you throw rocks again?" Joey replied, "Yes, I'll get a spanking." Murdock explained that he would not spank Joey this time. Instead, he would make the boy pick up rocks on the playground during recess today and the next two days. Joey was instructed to pick up a bucket from the office, fill it with rocks from the playground, and return with it to the office.

Murdock then removed another book from his shelf to see Joey's grades. Checking a student's academic standing was a routine part of Murdock's disciplinary procedures. When he saw that the boy's grades in math had slipped from a "B" to a "D," he said, "That is not good. Now go back to class and get some work done."

It was 1:30, and for the first time that day, Murdock had his office to himself. He began going through his mail. Before long, however, he received a phone call from the district assistant superintendent. They talked at length about the statewide PTA meeting scheduled for next month. Murdock emphasized the importance of having as many people as possible attend in order to build up rural county representation.

At 1:40, Murdock had scheduled one of his favorite routine activities: calling students into his office on their birthdays to pay them special recognition. A third-grade girl with long blonde hair stood at the doorway to Murdock's office with a shy smile on her face. Murdock gave her a warm welcome and asked her to close the door and come over to his desk. He and the secretary exchanged winks as he ushered her in.

Adopting a conspiratorial tone, Murdock told the girl that he knew she was expecting a birthday spanking, but he wanted to throw in a twist to the conventional practice. Instead of giving her the usual birthday spanking, he was going to smack the paddle on the floor, and he wanted her to let out a piercing scream

immediately following each blow. The girl giggled and nodded her head as a willing co-conspirator. Murdock took the paddle firmly in hand and hit the floor very hard a number of times. The girl let out several loud screams, which everyone in the office could hear. Soon everyone, secretarial staff included, was in hysterics. Wishing her a happy birthday, Murdock invited the girl to take several pieces of candy from a large ceramic jar on his desk to conclude the ceremony.

Joey returned to Murdock's office with a bucket filled with rocks. After checking the pail, Murdock reminded him that he had two more days to repeat this. Joey said "Okay" and left the office.

At 2:20, Murdock made drop-in visits to two classrooms in order to monitor the school's Reading Management Program. The progress of each student was recorded on charts displayed in each classroom. Periodically, Murdock scanned the charts, to note overall classroom progress as well as individual student progress. In Murdock's office was a larger chart for both the reading and math programs. When he returned to his office, Murdock stopped by the secretary's desk to ask her to update the chart when the report cards came out.

When classes were dismissed at 2:55, Murdock made a wardrobe change. He pulled on a blue sweatshirt and traded his brown leather loafers for "New Balance" running shoes. He walked out to the front of the school and stood by the bus loading zone to supervise the students as they boarded buses. After making sure the students had safely departed, Murdock walked to the track at the neighboring intermediate school. First he stretched a bit, then he jogged a couple of miles around the track.

After a quick trip home, Murdock returned to the school at 6:45 p.m. One of the PTA's annual fundraising events, the student art auction, was to take place this evening. Proceeds from past art auctions had been used to purchase new playground equipment, a glass display case, and various educational materials. For tonight's show, the usually bland school cafeteria had been transformed into a colorful and lively place. Vibrant, colorful pictures covered all four walls. The works had been done in a variety of mediums: crayon, watercolor, oil, pen and ink, and sketching pencil. Each was matted on construction paper of rich color and many were enclosed in wooden or aluminum frames. Above each section, a large letter indicating the first initial of the student's last name was posted.

By 7:30, parents and children had filled most of the seats at the long, narrow tables. A podium with a microphone attached had been moved to the front of the room. Several pictures were neatly laid on a table beside the podium. David DuPont, the maintenance man, assumed the role of auctioneer. He explained how the auction would work: The minimum bid was $1, the maximum bid $10. "If you raise your hand, scratch your head, you've just made a bid." He picked up a colorful crayon drawing in a brown

wooden frame. Holding it up for the audience to see, he announced the artist's name and grade. The bidding began and, when it was over, the picture was sold to none other than Ray Murdock.

After making his winning bid, the principal, neatly dressed in a cream colored suit that made him stand out in the crowd, strolled around the room, taking snapshots with a Polaroid camera. The auction continued. Having made his purchase, Murdock spent the rest of the evening greeting and talking with students and parents. By 8:30 p.m., when the bidding had been completed and the purchasers were paying for their drawings, Murdock was still chatting with people and continued to do so as most of the audience left the cafeteria and headed for home. Only after the cafeteria was almost empty would Murdock go home to get a well deserved rest.

Summary

Jefferson Elementary School served the town of Bradstone, located in a barren and somewhat impoverished rural area. Jefferson's students were predominately White and lower middle-class. Because of the unstable nature of their parents' employment status, many were forced to leave school during the year. The school's rate of turnover was 35%.

Despite the problems of low-income status and a highly mobile population, Jefferson's PTA boasted a 100% membership rate. Student comments about Murdock were generally favorable, and parent participation in school activities other than the PTA was high. One possible reason for the school's success in dealing with parents and students was that Ray Murdock, Jefferson's principal of 16 years, took an active role in school events, functioning as an exemplar to parents and students. His goal for Jefferson was simple, yet ambitious:

> I would like it [the school] to be a showcase in this county and in the state . . . of what education should be for kids. (TI, 3/4/83, p. 9)

He worked toward this goal by actively participating in school events such as art shows, birthday celebrations, and sports tournaments.

Murdock's relationship with teachers and school staff was a close one. He had hired most of his staff himself. Comments made by teachers about educational philosophy tended to echo Murdock's own stated views. He also took time to work alongside cafeteria and custodial staff. Frequently, he would even assist custodians in making repairs, thereby saving money, which he then channeled into other areas. He further supported school projects by lobbying for funds at both the district and the state level.

THE PRINCIPAL AND THE INSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEM OF THE SCHOOL

In the previous section, we introduced the reader to the school's setting, staff, and clients. We also attempted to bring our descriptions to life by allowing the reader to walk the halls with the principal, observing events as he experienced them. In this second portion of our study, we describe the elements of the school's instructional system, and we recount the manner in which the principal's activities influenced, or failed to influence, each aspect. Again, our purpose is to reveal the role of the principal in the complex task of managing instruction at the building level.

The array of elements that we describe as parts of the instructional system may surprise some readers, for we envision the instructional process as involving much more than didactic interactions between teacher and student. The technical and social aspects of instruction are created, to a great extent, by teachers and students in classrooms, but instructional processes are affected directly and indirectly by social and organizational features of the school itself. The school, in turn, is affected by its larger context. For example, opportunities and constraints for participants in schools derive from state and federal regulations, districtwide programs and policies, as well as from circumstances imposed by the communities within which schools reside. In addition, each participant in the schooling process brings to a building or classroom his or her own history of experiences and his or her beliefs. These personal and idiosyncratic elements of school organizations also greatly influence the nature of instruction and student experience (Dwyer, 1984). In the first section of this study, we illustrated how these factors interweave to form the context in which we view principals' behaviors and the consequences of those behaviors.

But to describe completely--or even satisfactorily--the complex blend of individuals and contexts that make up a school, we must, in some rational fashion, untangle policies, programs, individual proclivities, services, operating procedures, and even building designs. In order to accomplish this analysis, we must make distinctions, slicing organizational wholes into arbitrary and discrete pieces. The problem with any such dissection, however, is the artificial creation of categories. In the day-to-day events in the schools of our studies, no such distinctions occur; boundaries blur through multitudes of interactions and

interactional effects. Nor can our "surgery" be guided by previous work. Prior research has failed to set forth a single, generalizable model of schools--the successes of the extant models are hinged to the specific purposes of the authors' analyses (e.g., Charters & Jones, 1973; Dunkin & Biddle, 1974; Gowin, 1981; Metz, 1978; Smith & Geoffrey, 1968).

Our strategy in facing this problem is twofold. First, whenever possible, we have allowed our incisions to be guided by the practical sense of the principals and teachers with whom we worked, using those categories mentioned frequently by them or used by them in planning. Secondly, in order to illustrate the permeability of our categories, we have taken every opportunity to describe how the different parts of our model affect one another. The unavoidable consequence of this latter tactic is some redundancy. We hope the reader will be understanding and patient.

This section, then, begins with a description of the overall goals of the school and proceeds to an examination of the social or climatic factors supporting or interfering with realization of those goals. It also describes the technical or organizational aspects of instruction at the school that either harmonize or clash with those goals.

Jefferson's Social and Academic Goals

John Dewey (1916) asserted that as a society advances, the need for formalized education increases. Knowledge grows exponentially, its accruing bulk rapidly outpacing any single individual's capacity or opportunity to gather it all firsthand. Schools, in response, are appointed to pass on the experiences, achievements, and values of a society and to prepare individuals to contribute to the advancement of knowledge. As a result, children, through schooling, come to link the past to the future. Schools also serve a custodial purpose. Children constructively occupied as learners permit their parents the freedom to earn a living and secure a home. This multitude of purposes and responsibilities often finds expression through the social and academic goals that principals and teachers set for their students.

At Jefferson Elementary School, many staff members held goals consonant with Murdock's efforts to make the school, as he put it, "a showcase in this county and in the state." Teachers, as they set specific objectives related to academic and social concerns, were aware of Murdock's overarching goal, and they believed that his efforts in pursuit of his vision had been successful. For example, one teacher reported:

> I feel that he wants to make the best school that he [can]. . . . Because he's so hard . . . the school is a superior school. (TI, 6/6/83, p. 6)

This feeling, created more by example than by declaration on Murdock's part, was the school's raison d'etre, to which more specific social and academic goals were subordinated.

Social Goals: When Jefferson's teachers discussed social goals, they talked about building students' "self-confidence," "self-image," and capacity to "feel good about themselves as individuals" (TI, 5/12/83, p. 1; TI, 5/12/83, p. 7; TI, 6/6/83, p. 1). They wanted their students to "feel like they can make their own decisions," to understand that "they're special, that they're unique," and to "be [un]afraid to ask questions" (TI, 5/18/83, p. 1). In addition to emphasizing student self-esteem, many staff members stressed the importance of socializing children and talked about how to "civilize 'em" (TI, 5/12/83, p. 2), or "make good citizens out of the children" (TI, 5/19/83, p. 7). The kindergarten teacher, aware of her importance as most children's first teacher, strove to help her youngsters feel comfortable at school and enjoy their new roles as students (TI, 5/18/83, p. 1). As we will discuss shortly, many of the teachers' pedagogical strategies and disciplinary tactics lent themselves to helping children reach these nonacademic goals.

The same three themes--building children's self-esteem, socializing them, and helping them learn to love schooling--emerged during conversations with Ray Murdock. In one interview, Murdock gestured toward a poster hanging on the wall of the front office as he spoke about children. The poster depicted a young boy and girl and was captioned:

> I am only one, but I am one. I can't do everything, but I can do something. (FN, 3/4/83, p. 2)

For Murdock, this poster captured the importance of shaping students into strong individuals and teaching these individuals to live together and to cooperate. Murdock believed that "together, people can do anything" and that schools, because of their capacity to shape individuals and to promote cooperation, were "the hope of the country" (TI, 3/4/83, p. 9).

Murdock shared with his staff not only this belief that individuals could contribute to society but also the view that schools could, and should, contribute in a variety of ways to individual youngsters. In his office, as he sat behind his desk, he reflected on this other important aspect of schooling:

> There's a lot of divorces, broken homes. And kids are the ones that take the brunt of that. And they need a place to go where they have a sanctuary. And that sanctuary I hope would be me. I hope it would be teachers and counselors and the adults in this school. If I had my choice for kids, I'd love them to love school. It really gives me a good

> feeling when a kid says, "Boy, I like to come to school!" (TI, 3/4/83, p. 26)

Murdock and Jefferson's staff seemed to share the same goals in promoting the social growth of children. The consensus about social goals at Jefferson is not too surprising. First, the goals held by the staff were very general; most teachers would readily subscribe to them. As we will reveal in later sections, however, there was less agreement among the faculty about how these goals should be reached. Second, in his role as principal, Murdock could actively promote his social goals. His most potent avenue of influence was the authority to hire his own staff. At the time of our study, Murdock had personally hired all but two of Jefferson's 16 teachers. As gatekeeper, he could select teachers who espoused the goals in which he believed. Murdock also used the visibility that came with his position to model his preferred goals. For example, to support his goal of making school an enjoyable place, he personally organized and supervised lunchtime ping-pong tournaments (TI, 3/4/83, p. 26; FN, 5/15/83, p. 11), and to illustrate one way to improve students' self-concepts, he was the first to purchase a student painting at a PTA auction of student art (FN, 4/19/83, p. 2). Murdock also reinforced his social goals by placing them before teachers in written form. For example, the teacher handbook, written by Murdock, began with these lines from a poem by Dorothy Law Nolte:

> If a child lives with tolerance,
> He learns to be patient.
> If a child lives with encouragement,
> He learns confidence.
> If a child lives with praise,
> He learns to appreciate.
> If a child lives with fairness,
> He learns justice.
> If a child lives with security,
> He learns to have faith.
> If a child lives with approval,
> He learns to like himself.
> If a child lives with acceptance and friendship,
> He learns to find love in the world.
> (Teachers' Handbook, 1978-80, p. 1)

Did teachers get Murdock's message? Several staff members certainly noticed his concerns and the positive effects he achieved. For example, one noted:

> He's right there instructing [students] or playing with them in athletic events, and they respect him and think of him as a friend. He talks to them so much of the time that I think that he does know the ones that are having trouble, and he usually is able to pinpoint what the problem is. He helps them out if they're having problems with something.
> (TI, 5/19/83, p. 8)

Another said:

> He does good things for 'em, too. He's always doing these ping-pong tournaments and carnivals and anything else he can do. (TI, 6/6/83, p. 6)

And another reported:

> In the fall he came in and spent some time helping. You know, he just sat down with a kid and was helping him with his work. (TI, 5/23/83, p. 8)

Academic Goals: Consensus also characterized the views of Jefferson's staff in regard to academic goals. They gave priority to the teaching of reading and language skills. One teacher, citing the fact that some of her students' parents were illiterate, said that her goal was to give her children that moment of discovery when

> the little light bulb goes on in their head[s] and they say, "Oh! I got it! I can read!" (TI, 5/12/83, p. 5)

Her colleagues agreed overwhelmingly about the importance of instruction in reading and in other basic skill areas (TI, 5/5/83, p. 1; TI, 5/12/83, p. 1; TI, 5/18/83, p. 1; TI, 5/23/83, p. 5; TI, 5/23/83, p. 1; TI, 6/6/83, p. 1). Within the basic-skill framework, they expressed the common desire "[to] bring each kid up to his highest capabilities and abilities" (TI, 5/19/83, p. 1). Once again, the teachers indicated their awareness that these goals were also the academic goals that Murdock held for Jefferson's students (TI, 5/12/83, p. 9).

To explain his school's preoccupation with reading, Ray Murdock looked beyond the residents of his community:

> Reading, throughout the entire United States, has been a real concern for a good decade. When we realized that the feeling was for developing the basics more, we headed in that direction. (TI, 3/4/83, p. 12)

As revealed by the comments of several teachers, Murdock had initiated the idea of adopting the school's very visible Reading Skills Management Program, but he had also sought to involve teachers in it from the very beginning. One recounted that Murdock had personally learned of the program at a conference and had "thought it was excellent and brought [the idea] back" (TI, 5/12/83, p. 7). Another staff member described himself as "one of the ones that Murdock took . . . down to Herder to learn about the program" (TI, 5/12/83, p. 7). As a result of the visit, this teacher had become "a starter in it [the program]" (TI, 5/12/83, p. 7).

Briefly, the Reading Skills Management Program provided assessment tools and a record-keeping system to track the reading progress of each student. Student profiles covered areas of mastery as well as areas of weakness. Hundreds of individualized instructional units, which were stored in a resource center, were keyed to the skill profiles and contained the materials necessary for practicing and mastering skills. After a pilot phase, the system had been implemented in each of Jefferson's classes.

Charts displaying each child's progress were placed in every classroom (SO, 3/4/83, p. 6), and the principal maintained individual student progress files in his office in order to keep current a school-level reading skills chart (FN, 6/8/83, p. 4). Not only did Murdock make sure that his master chart was up-to-date (FN, 5/8/83, p. 8), but he routinely inspected the charts hanging in classrooms. One teacher told us:

> If you saw that chart in his office, he knows constantly where the weaknesses are, and he sort of pushes us to keep up our charts and so forth. (TI, 5/19/83, p. 12)

Murdock's insistence on keeping the charts current illustrates his zealous advocacy for the program. At times, his selling of the reading management system made him appear to be a fanatic. A relatively new staff member at Jefferson said:

> He's a real nut about [the Reading Management Skills Program]. In fact, when I came out to interview for the job, he spent the whole time talking about the management program and showing me everything that was going on. (TI, 5/23/83, p. 4)

But Murdock's unbridled support for the reading management program at Jefferson focused everyone's attention on reading instruction. Further, we believe that Murdock had created a consensus about its importance among the faculty. Enthusiasm rather than mere compliance typified the attitudes of the staff about the program. One staff member, for example, said:

> Sometimes I'll say to [Murdock], "Hey, you've just gotta come down and see my chart." I'll even take it up to him, because I'm really still impressed with reading management. (TI, 5/12/83, p. 13)

Commitment to reading instruction is typical in elementary schools, but the kind of enthusiasm evident in this teacher's words was the result of Murdock's own infectious enthusiasm.

Notably, this fervor for the skills management program did not lead Murdock to become actively involved at the pedagogical level in improving or enhancing the instruction of reading in the school. Teachers at Jefferson remained in control of the

technology they employed in their classrooms. Murdock neither offered substantive suggestions nor imposed specific instructional techniques. Instead, he appeared to use the ubiquitous skill charts as symbols to raise the staff's consciousness about the importance of reading and to unite their instructional efforts.

The Reading Skills Management Program was an example of a successful initiative in the area of setting academic goals by the school's principal. It is important to note, however, that a similar management program for mathematics had, despite Murdock's support, failed to capture teacher interest and had not been adopted at the school after a pilot phase. The difference in these two stories argues that the principal's support for an academic effort is essential but not necessarily compelling. Near the end of the 1983 school year, Murdock was positioning himself to launch another instructional program for Jefferson--this time in the area of computer literacy. In a conversation, he noted, "Computers are here to stay, we cannot ignore them" (TI, 3/4/83, p. 7). His faculty, however, had its skeptics. One teacher believed that computers were a fad, "another toy" (TI, 5/12/83, p. 7). Another was cool to the idea, applying a cost/benefit analysis to the suggestion:

> Oh, I've mixed emotions. I think it's necessary. I think we're going into the electronic age and I'm aware of all of that. And I'm able to accept change. The only thing is . . . what will I be sacrificing in the classroom? Where does the money come from? (TI, 5/12/83, p. 9)

In a school that was strapped for funds, this teacher's concern was critical. Whether or not a computer education program would become part of Jefferson's regular program, as Murdock hoped, might well depend on his ability to muster the necessary resources.

Summary: In brief, Murdock had high aspirations for his school. He wanted it to become a model rural elementary school, an exemplar in his state. Responding to national trends and to the needs of Jefferson's transient and low-achieving students, he had formulated several social and academic goals that helped to shape and direct the school's program. His staff shared these goals. Principal and teachers wanted children to grow into self-reliant adults who would be able to take their places in society. To accomplish this task, Jefferson's staff subscribed to the doctrine of teaching basic skills and making school a place in which children would be happy and productive.

The following sections describe how the principal and staff of Jefferson Elementary School strove to implement their goals, working to create a productive instructional climate and instructional organization. In previous work, we identified climate and instructional organization as avenues along which

principals could work to shape and improve their schools (Bossert et al., 1982). During our collaborative field work with principals, we continued to find these two concepts helpful in organizing the multitude of events, processes, and structures that we encountered in schools. Our definitions, however, changed to accommodate our expanding experiences. Again, the importance of these two concepts to our study of the instructional management role of principals is that they illuminate many of the strategies employed by our principals to accomplish the goals they established for their schools.

Jefferson's Instructional Climate

In our study, we treat school climate (a notion embraced by all of our participating principals) as an observable and changeable characteristic of schools. For our principals, climate encompassed both physical and social elements. Changing a school's climate could mean anything from painting walls to organizing the way students lined up at recess. The comprehensiveness of the concept can be grasped from one principal's comment: "School climate starts at the curb." In general, our principals perceived climate as a diverse set of properties that would communicate to students that schools are pleasant but serious work places designed to help students achieve. In the following account of Jefferson's instructional climate we will describe: a) the physical aspects of the school plant that promote or hinder the accomplishment of social and academic goals at the school; b) the social curriculum--activities designed to promote positive relationships within the school, student self-esteem, and productive attitudes toward learning; c) the school's discipline program; and d) the nature of the interrelationships among all members of the Jefferson learning community.

Physical Components: Jefferson Elementary School's setting, as described in the Introduction, was desolate. The dusty, arid environment only accentuated the bleakness of the school's faded, institutional facade. This stark setting was described by our field observer after her first visit to the school:

> Forty minutes after leaving Herder, I arrived at Jefferson Elementary School. Located in the middle of a barren desert, surrounded by sagebrush, the small yellow-brick school fit well into its surroundings. I noticed the barren playground . . . [of] leveled dirt, surrounded by more dirt. No trees, bushes, or any landscaping was to be found. Sitting upon the dirt were several types of playground equipment--made of steel bars . . . the paint was old and the colors faded.
>
> I walked from my car, across the brown grass, and entered the school. Once again, I was

> immediately struck by the desolation. (SO, 3/4/83, p. 1)

But two hours later, after meeting with the principal, being introduced to the staff, and touring the entire building, her impressions had changed remarkably.

> While leaving the school, I realized that my first impressions of the desolate, empty environment . . . were far from correct. The internal environment of the school is one of action, color, and life. (SO, 3/4/83, p. 9)

At this point, much of our field observer's reconsideration of Jefferson stemmed from her more careful examination of the physical environment that had been created and maintained throughout the building. Upon looking closer, she saw brightly painted walls; a pervasive use of students' work to decorate bulletin boards and walls; an abundance of equipment like ping-pong tables, sliding boards, jungle gyms, and tetherball poles; and classrooms crammed with instructional materials. These aspects of Jefferson's environment very quickly altered our field observer's visceral reaction to the school. By design, they were meant to impress children as well.

As the study of Jefferson continued and other data were collected, the story of the school's environment became even more paradoxical. This was, after all, a poor, rural school, yet in contrast to nearby elementary and middle schools, Jefferson was well endowed with space and materials. The resolution of this paradox lay in the actions of the school principal who wanted kids to "love school" and who wanted to create a "showcase." Murdock was very clear about his aims regarding facilities and equipment:

> If there's something that is beneficial, that helps kids to learn, then I would like to be able to use it. If there is a piece of equipment that would facilitate what we're trying to do, I'd like to have it. . . . I'll do the best I can with what I've got, and I think that is better than you will find in a lot of elementary schools. (TI, 3/4/83, p. 9)

Murdock employed a three-pronged attack to improve the physical components of Jefferson's instructional climate. The first approach was to maintain the facilities and equipment the school already possessed. A section of the Teachers' Handbook labeled "Care of Buildings, Classrooms, and Equipment" outlined maintenance responsibilities for staff members. The handbook assigned various duties to the custodian but also made it clear that "it is the teachers' duty to help the custodian" (Teachers' Handbook, 1978-80, p. 5). The manual specified ways in which teachers were expected to help. Murdock also made his own responsibilities clear. In italics, he wrote:

> If the janitorial service in any given room is unsatisfactory, the teacher shall report this to the principal. The janitor is to report to the principal any room left untidy or extremely unkempt. No teacher is to complain directly to the janitor, nor is the janitor to complain to the teacher. (Teachers' Handbook, 1978-80, p. 5)

In this manner, he placed himself at the center of communications about maintenance in the building. In addition, he specified in the manual how instructional equipment, such as projectors and cassette recorders, should be cared for and protected against vandalism or theft. He made similar points about office equipment. It was evident that Murdock did not wish to spend his limited budget on the repair or replacement of equipment lost because of careless use.

Murdock's actions supported his words. After a piano in the music room had been tampered with, Murdock personally surveyed the damage and fixed the piano's broken lock (FN, 5/15/83, p. 9). When an access road to his school began to deteriorate after a cable television company had dug it up and supposedly repaired their damage, Murdock himself called the company and insisted that they resurface the road (FN, 4/20/83, p. 6). When the custodian felt he needed to replace some hose, he consulted with Murdock, discussing information from a local hardware company. No hose was ordered until Murdock consented (FN, 4/5/83, p. 6). Dissatisfied with the state of the school's rest rooms and grounds, Murdock called in the custodian to tell him to clean the rest rooms more thoroughly and to keep litter off the front yard (FN, 5/15/83, p. 6). These instances, drawn from the observation records of days we spent at the school, were typical.

This principal's second line of attack for getting the most from his limited budget was to save dollars wherever he could by being a wise consumer of goods. Whether purchases were large or small, Murdock made the decisions. For example, when the custodian needed additional pads for the school's floor cleaner, Murdock discussed with him differences between types of pads, then selected and personally ordered six boxes of cleaning pads and eight boxes of buffing pads (FN, 5/15/83, p. 9). On another occasion, we watched while the custodian and Murdock discussed types of pipe adapters that might allow them to repair an old blowtorch. Later, in a reflective interview, Murdock explained that they had replaced the torch with a new one, but he had decided to return it and fix the old one, saving $200 in the process (FN, 4/20/83, p. 3). A final example: When the school's vacuum cleaner needed to be replaced, it was Murdock who initiated conversations with various vacuum outlets and arranged for demonstrations of their products (FN, 5/18/83, p. 3).

In addition to being very careful about how money was spent, Murdock saved funds by using his own diverse skills to provide services that would have been far costlier had he hired others

for these tasks. In one such instance, he spent part of his summer vacation building a large storage closet and some badly needed shelving for the school's kitchen. In mentioning this fact to our observer, he said simply, "The job needed to be done, so I did it" (SO, 3/4/83, p. 7). And in another instance of unexpected principal activity, Murdock had not only saved the school a good deal of money but had also earned the admiration of a staff member. This teacher told us:

> He painted my room! He says, "I'll paint your room." I said, "Okay." So he painted it bright green just to please me. (TI, 5/12/83, p. 16)

Finally, Murdock engaged in a variety of activities to augment the budget assigned to his school. One interaction with a faculty member illustrates his ingenuity. It had come to Murdock's attention that the sliding board in the school yard was unsafe. Having no money in the budget to replace it, Murdock sold the sliding board to the school's librarian, recouping half the cost of a new apparatus. He was then able to convince the PTA to fund the remaining 50 percent, and the sliding board was replaced (FN, 5/15/83, p. 9).

Murdock's PTA proved to be a successful fund raiser for Jefferson, one on which he relied heavily. Several activities each year, like the student art auction (FN, 4/19/83, p. 2), provided the funds that had been used to buy all of the school's playground equipment and audiovisual equipment, as well as the display cases in the front hallway. Murdock boasted that several hundred parents would turn out for each of the PTA meetings during the year (TI, 3/4/83, p. 19). The fact that Jefferson's PTA was so active was no accident. As one teacher put it: "We have a strong PTA and that's, to a large degree, [a result of] Murdock's efforts" (TI, 5/23/83, p. 13).

Murdock used the PTA to garner resources at the local level for his school, but the PTA was an important part of his larger design for improving the plight of rural schools in his state. He actively lobbied his state government on behalf of rural schools and developed clout through his PTA network. Discussing this strategy, he said:

> I'm concerned with what I can do in this school as principal. But I carry it further in my involvement in my professional associations. PTA is an example. [PTA] is local, but it's also state, and it's also national. So anything that happens on any of those levels, we get involved. . . . [For example], when the legislature comes out in committee or comes on the floor for a vote, we activate that phone tree. (TI, 3/4/83, p. 10)

As Murdock spoke, he swivelled in his chair and pointed to a chart on the wall behind his desk. He continued:

> We activate the phone tree in relation to the objectives that the PTA has set, and we have priorities established there and when those priorities are reflected upon by a piece of legislation, then we respond statewide. Now for somebody who lives in large cities, we're not talking about many people. But in this state, the PTA represents 30,000 people and that's quite a voting bloc in this state. The legislature is now coming to the state PTA for [direction]. We're having some impact for the first time. (TI, 3/4/83, p. 10)

In these examples, we see the principal of this small, rural school working in a variety of ways to cope with the meager budget he is presented with annually. The importance of his activities in relation to his context and to instruction are summed up in his own words:

> Everybody wants to have less taxes, and yet they want more services. And we live in an area where we're spread out far and wide--the people who live here are very conservative--they're ranch-type people. . . . Being able to have the type of funding that I feel we need to have the kinds of programs that we would like to develop, it just isn't there. When it comes down to it . . . we do the best that we can with the funds that are available. And sometimes that's pretty tough to do. (TI, 3/4/83, p. 8)

Social Curriculum: Just as a neat and clean environment, filled with interesting and colorful materials, can encourage children to get involved in school and think more positively about it, the very words, mannerisms, actions, and activities of staff members may communicate to students a staff's level of commitment to, and concern about, children. These cues, conscious or not, may influence students' perceptions of their own efficacy and of their "belongingness" within their school and classroom communities (Brookover et al., 1973; Fuller, Wood, Rapoport, & Dornbusch, 1981; Getzels & Thelen, 1960). These aspects of school climate make up the social curriculum of a school. Most of our participants believed that this curriculum was important in attaining the school's social and academic goals.

Teachers and principals often think about social curricula in terms of discipline programs or extracurricular and structured activities in which children assume responsibility and exercise some authority. Student councils, student hall monitors, or student crossing guards are examples of activities that might be

included under the social curriculum. In addition, teachers may give children classroom time to share personal problems or individual successes with their peers. Teachers might also use classroom activities to promote social goals for children. This section explores several aspects of Jefferson's social curriculum and discusses how each supports or hinders the school's social and academic goals. Jefferson's discipline program, however, will be addressed in a subsequent section.

Socializing students, building their self-esteem, and developing their appreciation for school and learning were the social goals that guided the Jefferson staff. Murdock's opinion of how best to reach these goals was captured in the title of the faculty handbook: "Children Learn What They Live." In accord with this dictum, Murdock took great care to behave in a way that communicated his values and beliefs to students and to faculty.

As mentioned in the Introduction, Murdock's concern with student well-being had not come naturally. His upbringing and his military training had instead emphasized the importance of rigid discipline based on unquestioning adherence to a code of conduct. But after many years in the classroom and several years as principal, he had come the conclusion that "being . . . as rigid as I was just simply isn't acceptable" (TI, 3/4/83, p. 5).

This warmer, more open side of Murdock was revealed in his activities around the school, activities that helped shape how students "lived" at Jefferson. For example, we watched Murdock personally organize lunchtime ping-pong and tetherball tournaments for students. For the ping-pong tournaments, he made sure that the tables had been set up properly, that students scheduled to play were present and orderly, and that each game was played by the rules. During play, he walked among the tables making friendly comments to students or, as our observer wrote, "joking around" (FN, 5/15/83, p. 11).

A highlight of the school year at Jefferson was the annual school carnival. The carnival produced revenue for the school program, but equally as important, it was also one of the events designed to give students a good time. Again, Murdock helped plan the activity and supervised the preparations. On carnival day, to open the festivities, he walked to the center of the playing field carrying a bullhorn and announced to the throng of excited parents and students: "The carnival will now begin" (FN, 6/8/83, p. 4). During the carnival, he strolled among the booths and games, ate popcorn, talked with parents, and joked with students (FN, 6/8/83, p. 12). At one point, eight small girls joined hands and danced in a circle around Murdock (FN, 6/8/83, p. 3).

After eating a hot dog and joining in more of the games, Murdock left for the airport to begin another traditional event of the carnival--an aerial egg drop. Prior to the carnival, Jefferson's students had designed small packages that they hoped would prevent raw eggs from breaking when dropped from a plane.

During the carnival, Murdock piloted his plane over the carnival and released dozens of the unusual packages. Students whose eggs survived the fall intact received a small prize (FN, 6/8/83, p. 1).

Murdock did not use just the spectacular events to befriend children and make them belong to the Jefferson Elementary School community; he also interacted with students in more personal ways by calling them to his office on their birthdays for a brief acknowledgment or by interrupting his own work to point the way for a lost child (FN, 5/15/83, p. 10). In addition, he encouraged children to think of others, and when they did so, he praised their good intentions. On one such occasion, two fourth-grade boys asked him if they could throw a surprise party for their teacher, whom they characterized as "a great teacher." Murdock commended them for their thoughtfulness before working out the final details. Then, after Murdock had advised them that the affair should not take too much time away from academics, the boys agreed on a 20-minute party that would be held late in the day (FN, 4/20/83, p. 2).

After watching Murdock serve french fries in the lunchroom one day, our observer asked him why he took time to work in the cafeteria. Murdock's response described another lesson on living that he thought was important to model for students and staff:

> I don't believe in asking people to do something that you won't do yourself. . . . I like the idea of being right in there and rubbing elbows with the workers. . . . I don't care what your job is . . . and that means that I shovel hash just like the rest of them, if need be. (I, 3/15/83, p. 12)

He also confided that helping in this manner gave him an excuse to be close to the kids and to supervise the lunchroom--"one of our trouble spots"--in an unobtrusive manner (I, 3/15/83, p. 12).

Murdock's faculty praised his direct involvement and his teaching by example. They especially noted his rapport with students (TI, 5/19/83, p. 8; TI, 5/19/83, p. 12; TI, 5/23/83, p. 8; TI, 6/6/83, p. 6). One even asserted that, in regard to getting along with students, "Ray comes pretty close to being what a principal should be" (TI, 5/19/83, p. 8). Teachers, then, were taking note of Murdock's demonstrations--what we might term his school-level social curriculum. The next important question is whether his message had any bearing on the kind of life Jefferson's students experienced in classrooms.

Some of Jefferson's teachers had created structures or had employed means of instruction to support the kinds of social goals that the staff professed. For example, one teacher scheduled a class meeting every Monday morning to give her students the opportunity to discuss and work through any personal

problems they might be having at school. According to the teacher, during these meetings they

> discuss[ed] personal problems within the class, not the home problems . . . but problems between individuals. Then, we talk[ed] about the good things of the past week and how we can improve . . . future goals of things to do in the classroom. (TI, 5/12/83, p. 1)

She explained that she believed that these class meetings gave children the opportunity to express themselves freely in group situations, encouraged openness and honesty, and promoted cooperation and cohesion among the students.

The classroom monitor program was another part of the social curriculum. Here students would rotate between such positions as paper passer, audiovisual manager, room neatness monitor, pledge of allegiance leader, and exercise leader. Typically, teachers followed their class roster to give each child the opportunity to be responsible for each of these tasks.

Teachers at Jefferson also said that special class projects and field trips were important in accomplishing their goals. Because these activities often relied upon the contributions of community members they helped students to feel a sense of connection to the larger community, and they revealed to students the link between school work and future goals. For example, various teachers reported having their students participate in swimming programs, taking field trips to observe a ballet, or bringing poets and artists to the classroom to share their expertise and excitement with the children. One teacher's husband offered to treat students to a trip to an airfield to "fiddle around with airplanes" (TI, 5/19/83, p. 3). He ended up giving 165 students rides in his airplane--an introduction to what the teacher called the "adult world."

Finally, perhaps the most important factor in accomplishing social goals and in enhancing school climate was the manner in which teachers interacted with their students on a day-to-day basis. Remembering that most of Jefferson's teachers shared Murdock's interests in promoting student self-esteem, it is not surprising that we found teachers working diligently to be positive with their students. For example, during one reading class, a teacher carefully controlled her tone of voice during instruction so as not to draw attention to students' mistakes. This teacher simply corrected a student's answer and further reinforced each student's efforts by saying "good" in an even tone without indicating whether one student's answer was better than another's (FN, 3/24/83, p. 7). Another teacher said:

> I don't scream, I don't humiliate, I don't pick at kids. I just try to be positive, even when I'm mad. (TI, 6/6/83, p. 1)

She explained her reasons:

> I hope I have never humiliated anybody. I just think back to this teacher I had in fifth grade, and I'm scared to death to this day of her. She was just awful; it was because she wanted a real disciplined classroom, but she just really destroyed some kids in the process. And that's the thing that I want to stay the most away from. (TI, 6/6/83, p. 1)

This teacher prevented classroom disruption when noise or inattention began to build by standing up, looking stern, and crossing her arms. Sometimes she withheld a recess period if her students were especially unruly.

One of her colleagues echoed this concern for student self-concept by stressing the importance of remaining as positive and open with children as possible:

> Some kids are afraid to ask questions because a teacher is so strict that they're afraid to talk to [the teacher] as a friend. (TI, 5/18/83, p. 1)

It seems that Murdock's message either reached his staff or that he had successfully hired teachers who shared his viewpoints. The two teachers quoted above seemed most influenced by their own experiences with students and teachers, pointing to the importance of the principal's picking teachers predisposed to his viewpoints.

There was, however, an anomaly in the Jefferson classroom story: a teacher who did not adhere to expressed norms about children and the appropriate ways to interact with them. Although she seemed at first to support the goal of socializing students by emphasizing the need to "civilize 'em" (TI, 5/12/83, p. 2), her continued conversation revealed that she meant something quite different from other teachers:

> You need to break their spirits just enough so everybody is in the same learning vein, at least ready to learn. (TI, 5/12/83, p. 1)

As she detailed her classroom approach, this instructor equated teaching to something akin to "dog training" (TI, 5/12/83, p. 1):

> I don't smile 'till Christmas. I try to be very cool. I don't really want to be their friend, necessarily because I don't feel like that's always the best teaching strategem. But I want them to know that this is the classroom and you have this many tests that we have to do, and we have to settle down and do

it. I'm pretty strict and stern and pretty cross at them. (TI, 5/12/83, p. 1)

Her deviation from the norm was noted by another teacher, who reported that her colleague's stern style often had parents complaining as early as the second day of each school year that their children no longer wanted to go to school.

The contradiction between Murdock's beliefs and those of his strict staff member again underscores Murdock's apparent role in the school. Although he modeled the types of behavior and interactions that he preferred, and although he attempted to hire teachers who held common views about teaching, he refrained from interfering in the way teachers actually worked in their classrooms. The teacher who frightened children had been at Jefferson for seven years; no apparent effort had been made to alter her teaching style despite common knowledge among the staff and community that she worked with children in this fashion.

Discipline: Although the administrators and teachers in our study included discipline as an important part of a school's social curriculum, the emphasis that they placed on the topic underlies our decision to give student discipline its own section in this report. In giving prominence to the question of discipline, the participants in our study were acting in accord with opinions expressed by scholars throughout the history of American education: For example, William T. Harris (1908) linked school discipline to the "moral education" of the country's children; Abraham Maslow (1954) theorized that children had to feel secure--the consequence of being in a safe environment--before they could devote energy and attention to higher order learning; and recently, and just as emphatically, researchers of effective schools have added their voices to the continuing concern about student deportment (Armor et al., 1976; Brookover & Lezotte, 1977; Venezky & Winfield, 1979; Wynne, 1981).

Our story of Jefferson Elementary School provides no exception. The previous section left the reader with images of the school's principal, Ray Murdock, teasing youngsters on their birthdays, laughing as children danced in a circle around him, or organizing ping-pong tournaments for youngsters. But upon occasion, this story also alluded to the "tough" side of Murdock as well. This "firm but fair" face of Murdock is readily seen during an incident when a child, a repeat offender, was brought to Murdock for throwing rocks on the playground. As the reader will remember, Murdock first drew an imaginary square on the floor around the boy's feet and made the student stand in it for a time. Then he let the student know the gravity of the situation by asking the boy if he would be sorry when he "put another student's eye out with a rock?" Next, Murdock checked a record book of disciplinary actions and discovered that the boy was a repeat offender. Murdock told this to the boy and asked if he knew the consequences of another offense. The boy replied, "Yes, I'll get a spanking." Murdock then disciplined the boy for this offense by making him pick up rocks from the playground

during recess for the next two days. Finally, Murdock checked the student's academic record and reprimanded him for poor performance (FN, 4/5/83, pp. 1-6).

In addition, Murdock took another step before dismissing this episode from his mind. Our field notes describe his next step:

> Murdock calls the boy's mother. He explains to her what her son has done and says that instead of spanking him, he is going to have him pick up rocks. He warns, however, "If that doesn't work, I may have to brush his feathers a bit."
>
> Much later, after the next recess, the boy returns to Murdock's office with a bucket of rocks. Murdock checks the pail and tells the student that he has two more days of recesses to continue doing the same thing. The boy says, "Okay," and leaves. (FN, 4/5/83, p. 6)

Several aspects of this episode demonstrate Murdock's beliefs and approach to discipline at Jefferson. First, despite the fact that the district allowed corporal punishment (Teachers' Handbook, 1978-80, p. 7) and despite the fact that the child was a repeat offender, Murdock did not spank the boy. A section from Murdock's handbook for his staff tells why:

> It is the philosophy of the administration that (1) corporal punishment is necessary only in extreme cases, and (2) the need for corporal punishment can be minimized through proper planning and preparation of class sessions by the teachers, and by establishing reasonable regulations to guide the students in classroom behavior. Each teacher is expected to maintain control in his respective class. However, the administration is ready to assist in any case which is construed to be beyond the realm of minor infraction. If and when corporal punishment is to be administered, it is to be done in the principal's office with an adult witness present. (Teachers' Handbook, 1978-80, p. 6)

In keeping with the emphasis on developing positive self-esteem in students, Murdock discouraged spanking children except in extreme cases.

Although the boy did not receive a spanking, he clearly took his principal seriously. This is the second instructive point in the episode. The child understood, without being told, that the next negative encounter would most likely result in a spanking. In fact, Murdock had laid the groundwork for any future encounter

by calling the parent. Thus, Murdock did have a bottom line, which he explained in an interview:

> I've been in some situations where, to put it crudely, the students ruled the roost. That is not the case here. I will not tolerate, under any circumstances, disrespect for staff members, whether they are aides or secretaries or anybody else. I expect [students] to respect the responsibility and authority we have and to go with it. . . .
>
> We don't attempt to dominate, but we attempt to direct and control. I think student control is important. We give them a swat on the butt if need be, but love them at the same time. (TI, 3/4/83, pp. 26-27)

The severity of the infractions committed by students determined when Murdock would employ corporal punishment. Some children might be sent to Murdock two or three times; others would see him up to half a dozen times. But at some point Murdock would resort to his paddle. In the course of a typical year he spanked 6-12 students (FN, 4/6/83, p. 3).

The third aspect about this episode worth noting is that the punishment fit the crime. As a rule, Murdock tended to invent consequences that did more than just punish. For example, when a child whom Murdock knew to be artistic was sent to the principal's office for fighting, Murdock disciplined the student by taking away some of his free time in order to have him design and prepare score charts for the ping-pong and tetherball tournaments (TI, 5/19/83, p. 3). As these examples indicate, Murdock's responses to children's misbehaviors were mindful of the need to terminate the negative behavior and, at the same time, true to his intent to create opportunities that would encourage constructive student activities.

The final point to be made about the rock-throwing episode is that the incident occurred on the play yard--not in a classroom. This was typical of all of the disciplinary episodes in which Murdock became involved and was indicative of a major aspect of Murdock's belief about classroom discipline. As stated in his handbook, he expected teachers to handle their own classroom discipline problems and frowned on students being sent to him during class time.

This had not always been the case at Jefferson. Murdock's immediate predecessor had followed a more rigid disciplinary policy: Teachers were to tally student infractions in a record book, and after any student received five tallies, that student was to be sent to the principal. A sixth tally required suspension. Upon becoming principal, Murdock promptly retired this system and, instead, encouraged teachers to do "whatever works best" (TI, 5/12/83, p. 4).

One might expect that this "whatever works best" message would have been interpreted as "I don't care what you do" by Jefferson's staff. This was not the case. Apparently, the school-level discipline that Murdock exercised did support teachers and transmitted a perfectly clear message to them, because discipline was an important goal for this school, and teachers understood their responsibilities. Teachers reported:

> [Murdock] felt that we should take care of those discipline problems within the classroom, unless they became too severe--then he would take care of them. . . . He says take care of it in the classroom. (TI, 5/12/83, p. 7)

> He maintains good discipline in the school and he is very supportive of teachers. But you know, as far as he's concerned, there's going to be good discipline in the school, and there's no other alternative. He'll settle for nothing less. (TI, 5/23/83, p. 6)

> You gotta have somebody that's gonna be the hard guy and he's the one. He doesn't like to be the mean guy, but he will be if he has to be. And I don't send kids very often, but when I do, I know that something's gonna happen. (TI, 6/6/83, p. 6)

> [Murdock] wants us to use whatever we feel is going to be the best for us to use, the best for the child. He leaves most of the discipline with us, and he takes care of the problems, the big problems, and we try not to bother him too much. But he's perfectly willing to accept that responsibility if we want it. (TI, 5/19/83, p. 11)

Murdock did attempt to provide more guidance for classroom discipline in the fall of 1982 when he provided in-service sessions for his staff using a series of film strips about "Assertive Discipline" (TI, 6/6/83, p. 12). Murdock's belief in this approach was reflected by the fact that many of the program's hallmarks were visible in his methods of dealing with children. For example, Murdock's practice of keeping accurate records of infractions and citing those records to children, reinforcing positive behavior, and linking consequences to misbehavior were all part of trying to teach children to be responsible for their own behavior under this system.

Jefferson's teachers were very much aware of Murdock's preference for this approach. As one teacher mentioned, "Assertive discipline is decision making on the child's part" (TI, 5/12/83, p. 3). Another explained the approach, as he understood it:

> [For assertive discipline,] you need positive reinforcement. So you get yourself a jar and put it in front of the room and every time somebody does something good, you have to reinforce him every day. Like a girl drops her pencil, and someone else picks it up for her, [then that someone else] picks up a marble and drops it in the jar. (TI, 6/6/83, p. 12)

But as he continued his description, he also said that the approach was "kinda hokey" if followed all of the way (TI, 6/6/83, p. 12). He felt that the marble jar example was "ridiculous" (TI, 6/6/83, p. 12). This teacher's reservations indicate that Jefferson's teachers were aware of the principles of assertive discipline, but as in many other aspects of Jefferson's program, they often adapted or rejected those principles when they stepped into their own classrooms. The result was that teachers' statements about discipline tended to conform to a norm, while actual discipline routines in classrooms varied a great deal.

Therefore, as we talked with teachers, we heard agreement about certain aspects of discipline at Jefferson. For example, most agreed that, whenever possible, discipline should be handled at the classroom level; that they--the teachers--should contact parents if problems with individual children continued; and that sending children to the principal was a last resort. In addition, most used detention as a routine way to punish children for unacceptable behavior. And few teachers kept careful records of students' infractions because they were aware that Murdock recorded serious incidents when he dealt with students in his office (SFI, 5/12/83, p. 3; SFI, 5/12/83, p. 3; SFI, 5/12/83, p. 3; SFI, 5/18/83, p. 3; SFI, 5/19/83, p. 3; SFI, 5/23/83, p. 3).

But as we witnessed classroom activities, the behavior of teachers differed markedly. For example, many teachers claimed to use "assertive discipline" (TI, 5/19/83, p. 11; TI, 5/23/83, p. 10; TI, 6/6/83, p. 7), but in practice, they employed various forms of disciplinary action. On the one hand, the kindergarten teacher encouraged proper student behavior by applying the assertive discipline strategy:

> The child's name is put on the board every morning, and as soon as they misbehave (they know all the rules they need to in order to behave) their name gets erased. The ones whose names stay up there get a certificate at the end of the day. If they continue to misbehave, then their name goes under a sad face and if they still continue they get the check, so that's part of assertive discipline. (TI, 5/18/83, p. 7)

But on the other hand, the teacher described previously who equated teaching with "dog training" felt that assertive discipline was unnecessary. She explained:

> My children don't need [assertive discipline]. You know, all of these little checks and minuses, that's fine but that's just belaboring with something they don't need. I have three rules in class: no more than one person at a pencil sharpener; no more than one person at the drinking fountain; and no more than one person in the bathroom at one time. So I try to limit walking around and getting into mischief. (TI, 5/12/83, p. 17)

Instead of assertive discipline, this teacher made free use of physical punishment in her classroom. She described her method to the observer as follows:

> Feel free to touch my kids any way you want to--you just go right ahead. I have one child that if you don't reach out and grab him as he's doing something awful, he'll triplicate that and may kill somebody. So it's "in your seats"--physically. So I do touch them, probably ought not to, but I do talk to parents beforehand. (TI, 5/12/83, p. 16)

She concluded:

> But the check and minuses systems and marbles in the bottle just aren't me . . . unless I need to. (TI, 5/12/83, p. 16)

She was an advocate of strong discipline because she was alarmed about what she perceived as a growing number of unruly children entering the school. From her point of view, "more kids seem[ed] to be coming in undisciplined" (TI, 5/12/83, p. 17).

This teacher's attitude was the exception, not the rule, at Jefferson, but the contrast between her technique and that of the kindergarten teacher exemplifies the range of disciplinary behaviors at the school. It should be noted, however, that most of the other teachers, like the kindergarten teacher, seemed to hold their students in high regard and worked with them in other ways. In several instances, we watched teachers at Jefferson maintain classroom control by communicating their sincere concern for their students and by creating norms for cooperation, responsibility, and self-pride within classrooms. We watched one teacher consistently maintain an even, caring tone of voice with her students and look them in the eye during conversations--actions which communicated to them that she took them seriously and that their concerns were important to her (FN, 4/29/83, p. 1). Another explained the normative structure that she had, from the very first, set up in her classroom:

> I want to instill pride in them, you know: How do you want me to treat you? When you're up [in front of the class], how do you want your classmates to treat you? Do you want your neighbor to be talking while you're trying to work? (I, 3/24/83, p. 3)

Another teacher organized class work to reinforce the importance of cooperation. By creating small reading groups composed of stronger students and weaker students, she was able to prevent unnecessary competition among students and promote peer tutoring (FN, 4/27/83, p. 5).

As in other portions of the Jefferson School story, Murdock's efforts to influence the discipline routines of teachers within their classrooms extended only as far as informing teachers about alternatives for establishing student deportment. He seemed not to interfere with classroom life, even when one teacher appeared to ignore district and school policy which mandated that corporal punishment be administered only in the presence of a witness and only in the principal's office. Despite this most blatant exception, the overall picture for maintaining control of student behavior at Jefferson was a positive rather than a punitive one--a picture consistent with Murdock's desire to make the school a "haven" for children.

Interrelationships: An important element of the climate of schools is the nature of the interrelationships among the members of the school community: the students, staff, and parents. The quality of these day-to-day relationships may be the best evidence of the cohesiveness of a group in its commitment to the organization's goals. Positive relationships among the stakeholders in a school demonstrate fundamental agreement and satisfaction with the means and ends of the organization--agreement that has an effect on the organization's ability to carry out its mission (see Homans, 1950; Janis, 1972; Maslow, 1954; Zander, 1977).

Beginning with our observer's first visit to Jefferson Elementary School, the evidence indicated that interrelationships at the school were overwhelmingly warm, caring, and humane. Conversations, posters, and episodes described thus far in this study support this conclusion. And in this section, we will focus more specifically on interrelationships in the school, and and we will highlight the antecedents and consequences of the relationships that bound together Jefferson's students, staff, and community.

Much can be learned from what is absent from the Jefferson School data set on the students. Notably, frequent accounts of serious or simply bothersome student fights in the lunchroom or on the playground do not appear in the record. In a school where the student body is typically lower middle-class, transient, and largely bused, the conditions seem ripe for chronic behavior problems. This, however, was not the case. Instead, we found

youngsters who were very animated at play and respectful and cooperative at work. They enjoyed Jefferson, reporting that they especially liked the special events held for them at the school during the year. Many attributed their affection for the school to its principal, and even the few repeat offenders at the school commented that Murdock helped them rather than threatened them (TI, 5/16/83, p. 3; TI, 5/23/83, p. 4; TI, 5/23/83, p. 3).

Overwhelmingly, teachers viewed their students in a positive light and refrained from mean gossip about them during breaks in the teachers' lounge. As previous sections recounted, we witnessed mutual respect between teachers and students in classrooms, and we saw and heard teachers consistently work toward improving children's self-esteem.

One interaction in the record perhaps best describes and summarizes interrelationships involving students and other members of the Jefferson School community:

> Two fourth-grade boys walk in to see Murdock. They ask if they can have a surprise party for their teacher "for being a great teacher." Murdock says that he thinks that's nice and asks how much time they want to take for this surprise. They tell him that they want to do it after the last recess. Murdock adds that he is concerned that they'll take too much time out of their academics, but to go ahead and do it--"but not for more than 20 minutes." They thank him and leave. (FN, 4/20/83, p. 2)

Only one of Jefferson's 15 full-time teachers had worked at the school for fewer than four years, and many had taught there for more than 10 years. All but two of the teaching staff had been hired by Murdock. In short, the staff was experienced, stable, and in tune with the principal's beliefs and values about schooling. Early in the study, Murdock alerted us to the faculty's cohesiveness, its "warmness" (TI, 3/4/83, p. 22). Besides the number of years of shared experience that bound this staff together, we found that the staff attributed its sense of cohesiveness to Murdock's style of leadership:

> [Murdock] tends to foster things that don't create competition among the teachers. You know, you don't feel . . . that you need to excel over others in order to get credit for what you do. It's a real cooperative kind of atmosphere in the school. (TI, 5/23/83, p. 7)

> He tries to keep the academic programs moving. He's always looking for things that are good for kids, but [he] also keeps the teachers fired up and interested. (TI, 5/23/83, p. 6)

> [Another principal that I had] would make catty remarks. That's the thing that stands out most, is that he would pit teachers against each other. I just think back to that and compare him with Mr. Murdock; Mr. Murdock would never, ever do something like that. More than that, he would say something nice. (TI, 6/6/83, p. 7)

> People feel like they can go and talk to [Murdock] the minute they have a problem. So you don't have people talking behind people's backs like you do in some schools. Everybody is really open and honest. (TI, 5/18/83, p. 5)

In addition to attributing the cooperative atmosphere of Jefferson School to Murdock's treatment of them, teachers were most outspoken about how Murdock enhanced their personal senses of self-worth and professional efficacy. The following comments were typical:

> He supported me when I went back to school. And I got my teaching certificate. (TI, 5/12/83, p. 11)

> The girls came back from a workshop and said, "Hey, this is fantastic. This is marvelous." And [Murdock] said, "I'm so excited about your enthusiasm; let's go with it." He's willing to back his teachers a hundred percent. (TI, 5/18/83, p. 6)

> [The other principal that I had]--if you wanted to move your room around, you had to ask [him] three weeks in advance and write it in triplicate. . . . So I appreciate the fact that Murdock's very professional with us. "You're the teacher and you should know," [he says,] "I don't see why you should have to ask me." (TI, 5/12/83, p. 6)

> Ray comes very close to [being the perfect principal]. I think the greatest thing that he has is that he has confidence in us. He lets us do what we want to do, teach the way we want to, as long as we have results. If we don't have results, then we're called on the carpet about it. But we have that freedom. (TI, 5/19/83, p. 7)

Our observations coalesced into a record that bore out these teachers' claims. Murdock's actions demonstrated support for his staff and helped instill a trust that was clearly shared by all. He seemed to accomplish this by conversing frequently with his

staff; sharing himself and demonstrating interest in their professional and personal lives (FN, 4/5/83, pp. 1, 7; FN, 4/20/83, p. 5; FN, 5/15/83, p. 3); and by listening carefully to their ideas about the school and helping them implement those ideas (FN, 4/5/83, p. 4; FN, 4/20/83, pp. 2, 3, 5; FN, 5/15/83, pp. 2, 4, 6). By report, his support of his staff included bucking the central office if necessary:

> He seems to have a really good relationship with the district in terms of being an advocate for his school. I know there were two years in a row that I was supposedly low man on the totem pole and was going to be cut. He just kept after them until, finally, they okayed another teaching position. They would take his word because his judgment had been good in the past. They would take his word that we were going to have so many kids and we would really need another teaching position; and he was able to convince them. (TI, 5/23/83, p. 8)

In summary, although Murdock would have been the last person to claim credit for the cohesiveness, cooperative attitudes, and trust that characterized Jefferson's faculty, he appears directly responsible for promoting and nurturing those aspects of faculty interrelationships. He created and maintained that ambience by constant conversation with his staff, by promoting their ideas, and by supporting them publicly when it counted.

The family-like atmosphere at Jefferson extended beyond the school's walls into the community. The main vehicle for parent participation at the school was the PTA, again a pet project of Murdock's. One teacher said:

> He's always telling us the PTA is here to help you and that we've gotta back 'em up all that we can. (TI, 6/6/83, p. 8)

On another occasion, Murdock himself explained his rationale about the importance of parent participation at the school:

> If you can actively involve and inform the people in your community, then I think you'll have a better chance of success.
>
> It's a difficult thing to do, but you have got to involve the community. I have learned through experience that if you don't, you pay a price. Now, when I first started out, I was spread so thin . . . that I didn't emphasize the community relations, or the PR, if you will. But it's an important part of the

> program. Like it or not, believe it or not, it's there. (TI, 3/4/83, p. 19)

The PTA was Murdock's major PR activity as well as a mechanism (as we have already stated) for raising additional funds for the school's program. In a rural setting where, according to Murdock, "[parents] commute or transport the kids 25 miles" to the school (TI, 3/4/83, p. 18), his success at bringing hundreds of parents to the school four or five times a year was somewhat amazing. His strategy was simple:

> At every one of those meetings we'll have anywhere from 300 to 500 parents attending that function because we involve the kids.
>
> That is, the program we put on will involve their activities. You do that, and you'll get the parents in. You don't, you won't. (TI, 3/4/83, p. 19)

Murdock also believed that sharing information with the community was vital, and he routinely employed several means. Perhaps his simplest strategy was holding frequent conversations with parents and community members about school business either by telephone (FN, 5/15/83, pp. 5, 10) or face to face (FN, 6/8/83, pp. 4-7). In addition, he frequently corresponded with parents (FN, 4/5/83, p. 6; FN, 6/8/83, p. 1). Further, Murdock published a monthly school newsletter that was circulated to parents (TI, 5/23/83, p. 7) and, from time to time, invited the local newspaper to cover special school events (FN, 6/8/83, p. 7).

The benefits for Jefferson of the interrelationship that Murdock nurtured between the school and the community were clear in our record: Parents annually added hundreds of dollars to the school's meager budget; parents were remarkably cooperative with the staff and supported special class activities by contributing their own time and resources; and parents provided a political force that Murdock used to influence state-level policy decisions on behalf of rural schools. Also, the parent support that Murdock commanded increased his own clout within the district. Regarding the latter benefit, one teacher said:

> I've been to board meetings, and when Ray speaks, they listen. (TI, 5/12/83, p. 9)

Summary: In short, the almost inescapable conclusion with regard to interrelationships is that Jefferson School was a happy, cohesive organization: a place where one would like to work as student or staff member; a place where one would expect to be treated well regardless of one's role; a place where one would feel comfortable and at home.

Underlying the good humor and warm relationships among members of this learning community was, perhaps, an unusual

degree of involvement for most of the actors in the setting: hundreds of parents turning out for elementary school events; 100% participation in the school PTA; staff members--even a teacher's spouse--freely giving their time and resources to enrich the school's program; the principal taking his own time to build facilities and paint classrooms. These and many other incidents in the Jefferson record are not typical of small, rural schools, whose students are bused in from a geographically dispersed population that is itself transient and struggling to make ends meet.

Building this kind of active participation was one of Murdock's primary, personal goals--one of his criteria for effectiveness:

> I really feel that if an administrator is going to be effective, he must be involved. And I mean that with the teachers, and I mean it with the kids, and I mean it with . . . the community. Involvement is the key.
>
> I've seen some administrators attempt to sit in their ivory tower, if you will, and not be willing to reach out and touch people, and I feel that they just have tremendous problems.
>
> I guess [this belief] comes from experience and seeing that to set yourself up as a hierarchy just doesn't get [the job] done. There's too much resentment from people . . . to that sort of organization.
>
> I love to be able to just walk along and have one of those little rascals reach around and grab me by the leg and hug. It's just a warm feeling.
>
> I've come to the realization that we all need each other. People need people. Like when one little rascal comes in here . . . in trouble, I am not short about letting him know what the score is. But by the same token, when it's all over, and he throws his arms around me, and I give him a big hug, then I can see the need for relationships.
>
> That goes not only with the kids but with my teachers as well. One of the things that you'll see around here is a warmness between us. (TI, 3/4/83, pp. 21-22)

Implicit in his statement is the message that one builds the involvement of others by getting involved oneself. This notion is perhaps the major explanation for Principal Ray Murdock's range of activities on behalf of his school.

Jefferson's Instructional Organization

Instructional organization is our collective term for the technical features of instructional coordination and delivery to which the principals in our study attended. For example, when acting to improve their instructional organizations, our principals manipulated class size and composition, scheduling, staff assignments, the scope and sequence of curriculum, the distribution of instructional materials, and even teaching styles. We suggest that the instructional climate--the concept we discussed in the immediately preceding section--influences students' and staff members' feelings and expections about their schools, and that the instructional organization delivers the reality.

In this section, we describe in greater detail the instructional system of Jefferson Elementary School, highlighting the content of instruction, class structures and teacher and student placement, pedagogy, and staff development. As in the previous section on the instructional climate, our purpose is to discuss the beliefs and activities of the principal that influence these important factors of schooling. While reading this section, it is important to recall that the principal's and staff's goals for Jefferson included emphasis on basic skills and the development of a program in which children would be happy and productive. Principal Murdock wanted his school to be an exemplary rural school in his state.

The Content of Instruction: Curriculum, subject matter, classes, topics, texts, program, schedule, and syllabus are a confusing array of terms often used by teachers and principals to describe what is taught in their classrooms or schools. Although these terms are somewhat analogous, they are not synonymous in that they tend to blur substance, method, and organization. In this section we wish to discuss the content of instruction at Jefferson and examine how that content was organized and determined. In so doing, we are discussing curriculum in the manner of Dunkin and Biddle (1974) who used that term as a broad concept for thinking about specific subject areas. But it was, perhaps, Dewey (1916) who best defined the content of instruction and who underscored its importance in his discussion of "subject matter":

> It consists of the facts observed, recalled, read, and talked about, and the ideas suggested, in course of a development of a situation having a purpose. . . . What is the significance . . . ?
>
> In the last analysis, all that the educator can do is modify stimuli so that response will as surely as is possible result in the formation of desirable intellectual and emotional dispositions. Obviously . . . the subject matter . . . [has] intimately to do

> with this business of supplying an environment. (pp. 180-181)

At Jefferson, the content of instruction was practically synonymous with textbooks. Every classroom was equipped with a complete set of texts from the county-adopted series: Houghton-Mifflin in reading, Holt in mathematics, Stevenson in language arts (a school-specific pilot, discussed below).

Until a year or two before the study, textbooks had been selected at individual school sites. Then the county created the position of Curriculum Director and took over the responsibility for text selection. A teacher explained that change in terms of an aspect of the rural-school context that we have already underscored--the need to save money:

> They've been trying to coordinate curriculum throughout the district . . . to reduce the cost factor in ordering books and things. (TI, 5/23/83, p. 11)

The actual selection of texts for the county was done by committee. This adoption committee was composed of teachers from each of the schools within the county, including members appointed by Ray Murdock from the Jefferson staff (FN, 6/6/83, p. 2; IOI, 6/23/83, Part I).

One might assume that this county-wide adoption system would standardize instruction across grade levels not only within each school but across Herder County. But this was not the case, as indicated by one Jefferson teacher when she said, "We've been using a mishmash of anything that works" (TI, 5/12/83, p. 4). The explanation for this paradox seemed to lie both in conflicting policies and day-to-day pragmatics.

Principal Murdock had stated his desire to have a coordinated and aligned curriculum at Jefferson. Two teachers indicated their awareness of his preference. One commented:

> He sees the value of texts [being] all the same. (TI, 5/12/83, p. 14)

The other said:

> He wants us all to have the same materials. . . . Ray's always tried to do that in the school . . . at least on grade level, so that when he's ordering books, all three of the rooms are using the same books. (TI, 5/23/83, p. 11)

But at the same time, Murdock emphasized that teachers should be free to adapt or supplement textbooks. He believed that:

> Each teacher should be allowed to teach individually . . . to develop their own objectives within the general framework . . . to decide what will work to the best advantage for the students and the teacher. (IOI, 6/23/83, Part II)

Teachers at Jefferson were not concerned with any possible conflict between freedom and prescription. They were all aware that the county-adopted textbooks were to be used in the school. Several teachers, in fact, referring to the collective staff, made remarks such as "we all use the same texts" (TI, 5/19/83, p. 13) or "I try to stick to, you know, what we're supposed to use" (TI, 6/6/83, p. 14). Some attributed use of these materials to availability rather than school policy: "[I use] what the school provides" (TI, 5/23/83, p. 2) or "You have to use the reading books because we only get two boxes of paper a year" (TI, 5/12/83, p. 14).

But teachers also reported that Murdock supported the teachers' individual rights to teach as they thought best. They understood that supplementing textbooks with other materials and activities was acceptable. They defended this practice by saying that they had to be free to teach individual children in the way that worked best. They did, however, believe that they would be held accountable for their decisions. As one teacher said:

> [I] use a lot of other materials from other sources, [but] we have Ray Murdock, so if we don't produce he's there to make sure that we do; as long as we're producing he doesn't interfere. (SFI, 5/19/83, p. 4)

One teacher suggested how the apparent conflicts in Murdock's curriculum policy might be resolved, and she also pointed out the benefit of Murdock's flexibility with regard to building policies:

> [Ray Murdock] sees the value of having textbooks all being the same, you know, if we're going to be using Holt, we oughta be using Holt all the way through the system . . . but it's not like everybody has to . . . . He's not closed to [any] idea as long as it's . . . for the best of the student.
>
> Now where I have taught before, everybody had their own textbooks . . . and everybody was at odds and that's one thing you can't say about Jefferson . . . we're all for one and one for all. We care. (TI, 5/12/83, p. 14)

It is interesting to note that although teachers exercised a great deal of autonomy in making curriculum decisions, textbooks did form the core of both math and reading instruction. In seven

of our eight classroom observations, teachers were using text materials as the basis for their activities with children; six other teachers reported in interviews that they based their instruction on textbooks. This did not mean, however, that teachers commonly used the county-wide adopted series of texts. They frequently used old textbooks. For example, one teacher commented that he had "about four other text series" to draw on for language instruction (TI, 4/13/83, p. 3).

But when teachers employed supplementary materials, their resources were somewhat limited. For example, two of the three second-grade teachers used the same supplementary reading text for low readers. In other grade levels, some teachers used materials from the school's media center, and others utilized various enrichment strategies contained in teachers' editions of their textbooks. Sometimes teachers simply eschewed the available materials as did both fourth-grade teachers who, while using the approved math text, did not use, or rarely used, the math workbook. And a few teachers devised their own materials and strategies. In all instances, teachers said that they made use of supplementary materials in order to add variety or fun to the school day.

A new language arts curriculum that was being tested by the staff during the year we were at Jefferson provided an excellent example of how curriculum was adopted in the school and how its nonstandard utilization evolved. The story began in 1981 when teachers in grades K-3 decided to pilot the Nancy Stevenson Language Arts Program. They persisted during 1982-83 despite the fact that the county decided to adopt the Economy Language Series.

In 1981, a professor at the university in Herder had contacted one of Jefferson's teachers to tell her about the Stevenson program. Subsequently, several teachers attended a two-week training session in Herder the following spring and became extremely enthusiastic about using the program. They proceeded to get Murdock's support, and with his backing, they received approval from the county curriculum director to pilot the program. As they told this story, the staff noted Murdock's prominence in gaining the necessary bureaucratic support. They also noted his responsiveness in finding money for materials. He approved a suggestion made by two teachers to forgo ordering the usual set of reading workbooks and, instead, to use the money for the Stevenson program (TI, 5/12/83, p. 5).

During this first-year pilot, only grades K-3 officially implemented the program. Murdock reported, however, that some of the Stevenson materials had been ordered for grades 4 and 5, and that he was "holding back on ordering them in their entirety until the teachers are more in agreement about how they feel that the method works" (IOI, 6/23/83, Part I). One fifth-grade teacher had begun using the program, and a grade-level colleague reported that the other two teachers might begin to use it the next year depending on the first teacher's reactions. Murdock's

strategy was to allow teachers to individually test out the program, but he expected a group decision before final adoption.

After the first-year trial, teachers' opinions about the program were mixed. A good deal of hesitancy was expressed by the upper-grade teachers. Some of the primary-grade teachers were extremely enthusiastic, but others were not. One teacher said that she did not really like the program, but that she kept quiet about this opinion (TI, 5/12/83, p. 4). She continued to use the materials but without much enthusiasm.

Teachers also varied the way they utilized the materials. The Stevenson program is an integrated reading/language arts program. Murdock himself described it that way (IOI, 6/23/83, Part I), but he also said that it was being piloted as a language program. Accordingly, five teachers used Stevenson for language or as a supplementary phonics program but continued to use Houghton-Mifflin for reading. Three others, however, saw Stevenson as primarily a reading program, as indicated by the comment of one of these who reported, "We're piloting [the Stevenson] reading program" this year (TI, 5/23/83, p. 2).

The different applications of the programs created some coordination problems. One teacher whose students were learning to read by the Stevenson approach expressed concern that the youngsters would have to adapt to another approach the following year (TI, 5/18/83, p. 9). According to some of the staff, Murdock was apparently unaware of this difference in use and the potential coordination problems it caused. One teacher commented: "He doesn't even know that much about Stevenson, but he likes the excitement everybody has about it, so he's willing to go with that" (TI, 5/18/83, p. 10). Again, Murdock's role had been to support his staff's enthusiasm, but he backed away from interfering with any individual's classroom decisions. The adoption of this reading/language program would certainly add new materials and ideas with which Jefferson's teachers could work, but without some strong coordinative thrust, it would never represent an aligned curriculum within the school. Apparently, Murdock chose not to attend to this aspect of instructional leadership.

As we stated at the beginning of this section, Murdock and his staff shared a commitment to teaching basic skills. In noting this, we wondered whether the Jefferson staff exhibited the same amount of agreement and conflict in the area of instructional objectives as they did in regard to the content of instruction. In asking this question, we discovered that textbooks provided not only the content of instruction at the school, but they also provided the only framework of instructional objectives used by the Jefferson staff.

We described, in the section on academic goals, the elaborate reading management program that was very visible throughout the school. We noted Murdock's commitment to it, but we also suggested that this program was more ceremonial than utilitarian.

Murdock corroborated our observation when asked about instructional objectives at the school. Sitting across from his wall chart of reading management objectives, he replied that there were no specific objectives other than

> an agreement throughout the staff that each individual teacher wants to advance each student as far as possible, and that all teachers strive to maintain grade level performance. (IOI, 6/23/83, Part I)

The teachers, on the other hand, all agreed that there were objectives, at least for reading and math. All six teachers who completed the School Features Inventory concurred. Three of the six teachers thought that the reading objectives came from the Reading Management System, which did, in fact, state explicitly the reading skills that students were to master. One of these teachers related the reading management objectives to what she did in her classroom by saying that she "makes an effort not to miss" the objectives (SFI, 5/23/83, p. 4).

More generally, however, Jefferson's staff believed that instructional objectives resided in the texts that they used. In other words, the textbooks defined and sequenced what was to be taught. Teachers noted that sometimes the texts provided insufficient drills for students to master the stated objectives and that this was another reason to supplement the textbooks. Only one teacher claimed that textbooks were sometimes "disjointed," making it necessary to reorganize material.

This discussion of instructional objectives underscores the importance of textbooks at Jefferson. Rather than providing the means to predetermined instructional ends, the texts became the means and the end. They provided both the content of instruction and, to the degree that it existed at all, the organization of instruction at Jefferson.

Structures and Placement: In the previous section, we described what was taught at Jefferson School and why it was taught. "Structures and Placement" explains how students and teachers were dispersed in order to deliver or receive that content. By structures, we mean the classifications of social groups in schools: for example, grade levels or grade-level clusters, classes or classrooms, or skill-level groups.

Sometimes the definitions of such groups are largely dependent upon the physical spaces prescribed within the limits of a building's architecture. In that case, the composition of groups may be determined by how many youngsters fit into a space and by how many such spaces are available in a school. In other situations groups may be more fluid, as when children move individually from classroom to classroom during a school day based on criteria such as achievement levels in various subjects (see "Pedagogy" for our discussion of within-classroom grouping).

In either case, a social context for learning is created. Cohorts of students are defined and maintained, sometimes with remarkable longevity, which can have varying impact on any member of the cohort. Students' progress can be impeded or accelerated; students may become stereotyped as "bright" or "slow" and inflexibly assigned accordingly; and teachers may develop expectations for students' capacities for learning that influence the nature of their instruction (see Brophy, 1973; Brophy & Good, 1974).

Teaching assignments are also an important element of school structure. Such assignments may be based on teachers' previous experiences, expertise, or preferences, or on administrative concerns regarding staff development, staff cohesiveness, or teachers' personalities and/or teaching styles. Bringing together specific teachers with individual students or student groups helps define the social context of instruction and influences the academic experience of children. (See Barnett & Filby, 1984; Filby & Barnett, 1982; and Filby, Barnett, & Bossert, 1982 for descriptions of how the social context of instruction influences students' perceptions and the rate at which materials are presented to students.)

The overall point is that one of the most familiar aspects of schools--classrooms containing a teacher and a group of students--is a critical factor in successful instruction. As such, the assignment of students and teachers to classrooms or their more fluid counterparts should be a primary concern of principals (Bossert et al., 1982). This section describes the role of Jefferson's principal in these decisions.

In regard to school-level class structure, Jefferson School had a total of 16 regular classrooms. Each classroom was self-contained and of one grade level. There was absolutely no clustering and no multi-graded combinations. The majority of students received their instruction from one teacher in one classroom throughout the entire year.

Within this traditional structure, there was little variation. Some teachers would, on their own initiative, occasionally "mix certain classes up" (IOI, 6/23/83, Part I). One teacher, for example, might take a group of students for math, while another attended to a reading class. This, however, was usually done only at the end of the year or whenever teachers felt they needed "a break in the monotony" (IOI, 6/23/83, Part I).

There was also some cross-classroom grouping. For example, students would be moved either up or down a grade for a certain subject and sent to the appropriate classroom for instruction. Murdock stated that one of the main reasons that his teachers utilized this strategy was to provide a better instructional context for individual students (IOI, 6/23/83, Part I). The decision to send children to other classrooms for specific

subjects was always made by the classroom teachers. There were no explicit rules governing these decisions (IOI, 6/23/83, Part I).

In addition to the 16 regular classrooms at Jefferson, there were three special programs for students. A special education class served students in grades kindergarten through five. All of these students met in one self-contained classroom. A Chapter 1 program operated on a pullout basis, drawing from their regular classrooms students who needed remediation in reading, math, and language arts. This program attended to the needs of youngsters in grades two through five. Finally, Jefferson's strongest academic students met once each week with a gifted-education teacher. This teacher was not a regular staff person but traveled among the Herder County schools providing enrichment classes.

The assignment of students to any of these classrooms or programs was made primarily by teachers and the school counselor. The assignment of children with special problems also involved the school nurse or district psychologist; parents participated in particularly difficult cases. Principal Murdock identified the school counselor as the person with the "main responsibility" for the latter cases, but he was quick to add that assignments were made "in combination with staff members" (IOI, 6/23/83, Part I). The assignment process took place at the end of each school year and was part of the more general concern over student evaluation and promotion. Murdock mentioned that he was part of the team that made these decisions. Although district policy assigned primary responsibility to the school principal for promotion, Murdock maintained that he abided by the decision of the "team." He mentioned that they always considered both academic and social growth when determining whether a student should be promoted or retained (IOI, 6/23/83, Part II).

According to Murdock, the primary consideration governing the assignment of students to teachers within grade levels was the match between the student's and teacher's personalities. He went on to say that this was done to achieve a "balance" in student learning style and teacher instructional style. He also mentioned the importance of considering how individual children behaved in school and finding a teacher with suitable disciplinary techniques (IOI, 6/23/83, Part II).

The assignment criterion with the lowest priority was student achievement. This was because Murdock wanted thoroughly heterogeneous classes that exhibited a "bell-curve average" as the status quo for every classroom (IOI, 6/23/83, Part I). He expressed his rationale for this goal in the following way:

> I feel that right now there is too much emphasis placed on the lower end of the spectrum. I'm speaking of students who are mentally retarded. Gifted students also [get too much attention]. I think that we place so

> much emphasis on those students that we're forgetting the majority of kids in the middle. And I think these are the kids that are going to carry the load, the burden for us in the future. (TI, 3/4/83, p. 14)

In addition, Murdock wanted classrooms where "no one teacher ends up with all the discipline problems or all the gifted students" (IOI, 6/23/83, Part II).

There was no question about Murdock's view of the importance of teachers in his school:

> In my judgment, the success of any school is keyed upon one person, and that's the teacher. If you've got a good teacher, you can make a lot of things happen. If you don't have a good teacher, then theoretically, you're going to have some problems. (TI, 3/4/83, p. 5)

From his teachers' perspectives, he was particularly good at selecting teachers with ideas similar to his about schooling. In observing their own cohesiveness as a staff, one teacher succinctly described Murdock's ability to identify "good teachers," specifying what in her mind was the most important role of the principal:

> I think the first role [of the principal] is his ability to screen before he hires. [Murdock] hired ten teachers the first year I was here. There wasn't a dud in the bunch. We all got along well. We all blended into the current staff and that made really a big difference, I think--just who you hire. (TI, 5/23/83, p. 7)

There were no new teachers hired at Jefferson during our study, nor were there changes in any teacher's classroom assignment. Knowing how such decisions were made remains, therefore, a matter of speculation. We assume that Murdock's decisions about assigning teachers to specific grade levels had a great deal to do with his overarching perspective about his staff:

> We have to consider, too, that every teacher is their own personality. . . . You have to come down and work more individually with each person and their personality. (TI, 3/4/83, p. 5)

Pedagogy: Lortie (1975) wrote about the ideals of teachers:

> Teachers favor outcomes for students which are not arcane. Their purposes, in fact, seem to be relatively traditional; they want to produce "good" people--students who like

> learning--and they hope they will attain such goals with all their students. . . .
>
> We find that the goals sought by teachers cannot be routinely realized. Their ideals are difficult and demanding: exerting moral influence, "soldering" students to learning, and achieving general impact presume great capacity to penetrate and alter the consciousness of students. (pp. 132-133)

In his words, we glimpse the essence of teaching, the ideals to which men and women of that profession largely aspire. Lortie's statement also confronts us with the fact that teachers' goals for students are difficult to achieve. In this light, those things which teachers do in their classrooms, the activities or tasks they lead and in which they involve students become critically important.

The variety of strategies and materials utilized by teachers is remarkably small given the diversity of students and contexts in which they work. Further, we can gather from historical chronicles and archival representations that the delivery of instruction has changed little over the centuries. Despite the aspirations of philosophers, psychologists, sociologists, and radical educators (Mayhew & Edwards, 1936; Neill, 1960; Skinner, 1948; Smith & Keith, 1971) and the advent of a variety of audiovisual technologies, a preponderance of whole-group, teacher-directed instruction remains.

The range of pedagogic diversity that does commonly occur in schools was captured by Bossert (1979) in only three categories:

> Recitation--An activity that involves the whole class or a large group of children in a single task: The children listen to the question the teacher asks, raise their hands, wait to be recognized, and give an answer . . . the teacher usually controls the flow of questions and answers.
>
> Class Task--Worksheets, tests, math assignments, or other tasks assigned to the entire class.
>
> Multitask--Usually includes tasks like independent reading, small group and independent projects, artwork, and crafts. These activities involve the greatest amount of pupil choice in organizing and completing the work. (pp. 44-45)

The choice of instructional strategy seems to depend on many factors. Attempting to model classroom teaching, Dunkin and Biddle (1974) noted that the instructional approach selected by

teachers is influenced by their formative and training experiences and by their own psychological "properties" (p. 40). In addition, as in our own conception (see Figure 1, p. v), they noted the importance of context variables such as community, school size, student ethnic composition, etc. on classroom practice. (For further examples, see Dwyer, Smith, Prunty & Kleine, in press, a case study of contextual impact on an educational innovation.) Finally, Dunkin and Biddle underscored the importance of the students--important partners in any instructional task:

> Most systems for studying teaching have concentrated on teacher behavior, assuming, reasonably, that much of the success of teaching is in the teacher's hands. . . . Are these presumptions adequate? Surely teachers not only induce but also react to pupil behavior. . . . In some ways, therefore, teacher behavior is also a function of pupil behavior, and the success of the teaching enterprise rests with pupils as well as with teachers. (p. 44)

The purpose of our study, of course, is to look beyond the teacher and his or her students and examine the role of the principal in the leadership and management of instruction. This section typifies the pedagogy employed at Jefferson Elementary School and seeks to explain the instructional patterns that we found by relating them to student, teacher, principal, and other contextual factors.

The most prevalent instructional technique at Jefferson seemed to be the traditional method described above, consisting of lecture, recitation, and seatwork. In other words, almost all instruction was teacher-directed. This traditional method of teaching is illustrated by the following example observed in a second-grade classroom:

> A list of contractions was neatly written on the board and [the teacher] went around the room asking each student to read the one she was pointing to on the board. She systematically did this and the students did not respond unless they were asked to. When a student had a problem reading the word, she would call on another student that had his or her hand up. (FN, 3/24/83, p. 7)

Similarly, a fifth-grade teacher described her "relatively typical day" by saying:

> Generally, what I do is to go through this type of introduction . . . then I generally give them some kind of seatwork. I correct that--they bring it up when they're finished--

> and if they pass that with some kind of accuracy, then I give them some kind of assignment that they are to . . . do at their seats until the period is over. (FN, 4/13/83, p. 2)

Most of Jefferson's teachers, grades K-6, operated in this manner. Only one teacher talked about using a different method--and even this departure was only in the planning stage. Our observer noted:

> A third-grade language teacher told of her plans to put all the desks into clusters where six groups of four students would go to work on different activities. This plan for change contrasted dramatically with her usual way of teaching which was very traditional in approach and consisted of the class working on an assignment as a whole with no group work whatsoever. (FN, 4/29/83, p. 5)

Although traditional instruction was the norm, there were some minor variations in the recitation and seatwork routines. For example, one second-grade teacher had her children read orally to her and to another child at least once a week (TI, 3/24/83, p. 2); a fourth-grade teacher made a practice of having his students (especially those who were not well behaved) go to the blackboards to work (FN, 4/6/83, p. 1); and another fourth-grade teacher used students as teacher's aides by giving them the responsibility to demonstrate, check, and help with classroom assignments (FN, 4/12/83, p. 1). Even these "variations," however, remained very teacher-directed activities.

Interestingly enough, despite the similarity in teaching styles, almost all of the teachers commented on their "flexibility and freedom to do what you want to do" (TI, 5/18/83, p. 5). This freedom, they felt, came from Principal Murdock and his approach to instructional leadership. As one teacher explained:

> [Murdock's] real positive, and he lets you try new things. . . . He doesn't, you know, say, okay, we're using this book and you're gonna use it whether you like it or not. (TI, 5/18/83, p. 4)

Another teacher said:

> I think the greatest thing that [Murdock] has is that he has confidence in us; he lets us do what we want to do, teach the way we want to teach, as long as we have results. (TI, 5/19/83, p. 7)

And another teacher commented:

> Any time you learn anything new and are excited about it, [Murdock's] really open to hearing about it and trying it out if you want. (TI, 5/18/83, p. 7)

Murdock's personality and his attitude toward his teachers also seemed to influence some of the teachers' instructional styles. For example, one teacher stated:

> I want to please him. He's an important person to please. Not just for evaluation. (TI, 5/12/83, p. 6)

Another teacher added:

> He's told us he's gonna retire in a few years and it's gonna be--oh, dear!--what's life gonna be like? We're very ingrained in the way he thinks. (TI, 5/12/83, p. 6)

Many of the teachers talked about Murdock's fairness, openness, and positive regard for others (TI, 5/12/83, p. 9; TI, 5/12/83, p. 6; TI, 5/18/83, pp. 4, 5; TI, 6/6/83, p. 5). In turn, some of these teachers tried to exhibit the same traits in their own classrooms: They never ridiculed their students' mistakes; they tried to keep negative feedback to a minimum; they concentrated on giving positive reinforcement; and/or they refused to compare one student to another (FN, 3/24/83, pp. 7-8; FN, 4/6/83, p. 3). A few of the teachers also seemed to emulate Murdock's easy-going personality. For example, during one lesson, mirthful laughter filled a fifth-grade classroom as the teacher made free use of puns throughout a language lesson (FN, 4/13/83, p. 3).

Aside from Murdock's winning personality and attitude, teachers noticed other ways in which he directly influenced their instruction. As one teacher reported:

> I've seen [Murdock] talk to teachers and say, "Don't you think you could beef up your program?" or "Don't you think you're having too many film strips?" I know he does that. (TI, 5/12/83, p. 10)

Although most of our examples indicate that Murdock was reluctant to intervene at the classroom level, this teacher's observation does suggest that Murdock did, on occasion, step in to draw the line.

Murdock's own enthusiasm for parts of the Jefferson instructional program also influenced his teachers. As described in the section on academic goals, his excitement over the reading management program proved infectious. Teachers did not

necessarily teach differently or better because of that excitement, but they were clearly more aware of the importance of reading instruction. One teacher practically bubbled, saying:

> I'm really still impressed with reading management. . . . I'll sit down and I'll just quickly give [a student] a reading management test and I can tell . . . in ten minutes just exactly what his problems are and where I can zero in and start right away helping. And that's of [real] value. (TI, 5/12/83, p. 13)

Teachers were aware, then, of the needs of individual students and had the technology at hand to instruct in an individualized mode. But as we have already suggested, despite this technology, they relied primarily on whole-group instruction.

In addition to Murdock's influence, Jefferson's teachers mentioned several other sources of influence on their pedagogic strategies. For example, some teachers adopted classroom strategies from the teachers with whom they had worked as student teachers or teacher's aides (TI, 5/18/83, p. 2; TI, 5/23/83, p. 5); others picked up ideas from their own children's teachers (TI, 5/19/83, p. 3); and still others learned techniques from other teachers in the school (TI, 5/19/83, p. 3). A majority of the teachers was also influenced by post-graduate education classes. Many had enrolled in the same graduate classes at the same time, traveling the long distance from Bradstone to Herder together (TI, 5/19/83, p. 2), which may have been another reason for the instructional similarities at Jefferson.

In summation, the teachers at Jefferson all chose similar instructional methods traditional in nature, predominately characterized by lecture, recitation, and seatwork. Despite these similarities, however, the teachers were influenced by a number of different factors, one of the most important being the principal. Teachers credited their autonomy to the freedom he permitted them, and they appreciated his support and style of leadership. As one teacher stated:

> We have that freedom, and I don't think that there are many people that do. . . . I think it's very important. I've gone through, I don't know how many principals, but he's the only one that I felt . . . would back you in everything as long as he feels that you're doing right. (TI, 5/19/83, p. 7)

Homework, another aspect of classroom pedagogy, was discussed in Murdock's handbook for teachers. The official policy read:

> Homework is most certainly very important. However, it is felt that it should not be overdone, and along with academic life, a student needs time to be "just a kid."

> Homework should not be assigned as punishment. (Teacher's Handbook, 1978-80, p. 3)

More informally, Murdock encouraged his teachers to give no more than 30 minutes of homework to any student for one evening. He wanted to limit homework for two reasons: a) the curriculum materials and teaching methods employed in the school, particularly the Stevenson Reading and Language Program, were quite intensive; and b) many students' parents were poorly educated and had difficulty helping their children with homework (IOI, 6/23/83, Part II).

The teachers seemed to share Murdock's beliefs, especially about difficulties arising from family backgrounds. This concern, however, led to contradictory strategies. One teacher explained:

> We try not to let [texts] go home because of the transient population. If it is a stable family that's been here and the kids say, "Can I?" I say, "Oh, sure, but make sure you bring it back tomorrow." If it's not a stable family, I may give them a different book or some reading papers to take home to read. (TI, 3/24/83, p. 5)

Other teachers did just the opposite. A fourth-grade teacher described her policy this way:

> The students can take the textbook home, but not the activity books because they tend to lose the paperbacks. (TI, 4/12/83, p. 5)

Students' home life, however, was not the only factor that shaped teachers' homework policies. One fourth-grade teacher reasoned that the paperback activity books were "inadequate" as home study guides. If he needed more work from the students, he made assignments from an older set of textbooks (FN, 4/6/83, p. 2).

Teachers had different reasons for assigning homework. Some, for example, used homework only as a way of having children complete unfinished classroom assignments (TI, 4/6/83, p. 5; TI, 5/12/83, p. 8). Other teachers used homework as a way of checking students' mastery of skills. For example, one fifth-grade teacher stated:

> I generally give them some kind of seatwork. I correct that; they bring it up to me when they're finished, and if they pass that with some kind of accuracy, then I give them some kind of assignment that they are to take home. (TI, 4/13/83, p. 2)

The students' final grade on the assignment would be based on the homework, not on the classroom portion of the assignment.

Finally, some teachers also used homework as a way of keeping students who were pulled out of their classrooms for remedial help caught up with class work. One fourth-grade teacher, who had several Chapter 1 students, regularly saved all the work these students missed during times they were out of her class and assigned it to them for homework (TI, 4/12/83, p. 6).

Like the many other aspects of Jefferson's instructional organization that we have discussed to this point, homework was also governed by a loosely enforced policy. Teachers decided individually what homework, if any, they would assign and for what purpose.

Staff Development: Nothing seemed as important to the dozens of principals with whom we spoke in this study than the quality of their teachers. Again and again, we were told that teachers make the difference in the quality of schools. The hiring and retention of teachers as well as the development of their instructional expertise, then, seems critical in the establishment of an effective instructional system in any school.

Illuminating the same point, Shulman (1984) focused on teachers in a statement about effective schools that he termed "outrageous":

> I would like to suggest another image for you to carry around in your heads of what an effective school is like--an image that goes beyond the empirical view of a school that produces gains in test scores . . . . I'd like to suggest a view of an effective school that you will treat as outrageous. I think we ought to define effective schools as those that are educative settings for teachers. (Address)

He justified his proposal as follows:

> If the quality of education for kids ultimately depends on how smart teachers are about their teaching and about their subjects, what better place for them to learn new things than in the school itself?

Noting our principals' beliefs about the importance of teachers and finding no argument with Shulman's logic, we consider the topic of staff development a crucial part of the technology of instructional systems (see also Showers, 1984).

In conceptualizing staff development as growth or as learning experiences for teachers, three common aspects of the day-to-day world of schools seem germane: a) the supervision of instruction; b) teacher evaluation; and c) in-service opportunities for staff. We have already woven the topic of supervision in this school into other portions of the story. For

example, through supervision, we find our principals influencing social and academic goals, social and academic curriculum, and pedagogy. In this section, then, we would like to illuminate the principal's activities and attitudes regarding teacher evaluation and discuss his role in providing in-service activities for teachers.

Before describing teacher evaluation at Jefferson, we would like to clarify the difference between instructional supervision and teacher evaluation, for the two are often confused. McLaughlin (1984) distinguished between the two:

> Supervision of teaching and evaluation of teaching are not the same thing. Instructional supervision is the process of facilitating the professional growth of a teacher by giving the teacher feedback about classroom interactions and helping the teacher to make use of that feedback to become a more effective teacher. Evaluation is the analysis of overall teaching performance to meet contractual requirements, including the measurement of teacher change and improvement both in teaching and professional conduct to make personnel decisions for job placement, tenure, performance improvement plans, dismissal, and recognition and promotion.
>
> The power to supervise is bestowed by teachers and is intended to create trust between the teacher and supervisor, to facilitate teacher learning and develop teacher autonomy. The power to evaluate is bestowed by the governing board, administration, and state regulations. (p. 4)

Teacher evaluation, the bureaucratic responsibility that McLaughlin defined, was considered by Murdock to be the most difficult part of his job (IOI, 6/23/83, Part II). The formal evaluation procedure required by the district stipulated that teachers were to be evaluated once a year. New teachers were to be evaluated four times during their first year of practice. The district evaluation form, Murdock believed, was too subjective as it asked only for the principal's opinion about teachers' performances. He wrestled with finding more objective means of evaluation. At the time of our study, he was supplementing the district form with one he had developed from a training program in which he had participated (IOI, 6/23/83, Part II).

During the time that he was complaining that evaluation in the district was too subjective, the central office had proposed a "target teaching" alternative for evaluation that focused on teaching techniques. Murdock was worried that his teachers would be threatened by this process and planned to wait until they exhibited some comfort with the idea before implementing it (TI,

3/15/83, p. 7). He also hoped to learn from the experiences of other principals who were currently using the new evaluation system. Asked about this program later in the year, Murdock said that it placed too much emphasis on teaching techniques and did not take into consideration teachers' personalities and other variables in the assessment of their proficiency (IOI, 6/23/83, Part II). In other words, it was not subjective enough.

Given his background, Murdock's difficulty with evaluation seemed unusual. One of his teachers suggested to us a "too-nice-a-guy" hypothesis for Murdock's dilemma over evaluation:

> I think that evaluation is extremely difficult for him, and he always says nice things. (TI, 5/12/83, p. 8)

Murdock himself suggested another. He did not feel that he had enough time to carry out the responsibility in the way he should (IOI, 6/23/83, Part II).

Specifically, Murdock spoke about the importance of "follow-up" in evaluation, and he said that his busy schedule prevented him from carrying out this task (IOI, 6/23/83, Part II). Some of his teachers remarked similarly that he had become particularly busy with out-of-school responsibilities such as meeting with the state PTA and the state legislature. Some recalled that Murdock had visited their classrooms more frequently in previous years and that he had spent more time helping children with their assignments (TI, 5/19/83, p. 10; TI, 5/23/83, p. 8).

Nevertheless, Murdock had stipulated some of his expectations for teachers in the Teachers' Handbook. Under the heading "Academic Freedom," he stated that teachers would be given the option of deciding how their instructional goals were to be met, but he was forceful about keeping that freedom within the bounds of school and district policy. He also had written that teachers would be held accountable for discipline within their classrooms and for the general conduct of their students anywhere on school grounds or while on school field trips. He further required his teachers to give sufficient notice of absence because of illness and to maintain a current assignment plan book for substitute teachers. Finally, he mandated that teachers were responsible along with building custodians for the general maintenance of their classrooms.

Further, Murdock's posture or activities suggested that he did know a great deal about what went on in the school--a prerequisite for evaluation. Teachers suggested a bevy of information channels that he seemed to maintain. One said that Murdock was aware of her classroom activities because she constantly volunteered information (TI, 5/12/83, p. 11). Several others believed that the principal discovered facts about their classrooms by his frequent "walk-throughs." They were particularly aware of the increased frequency of these passes during evaluation periods (TI, 5/12/83, p. 10; TI, 5/12/83, p.

13; TI, 5/19/83, p. 11; TI, 5/23/83, p. 8; TI, 6/6/83, p. 6). Murdock also gathered information by talking with students (IOI, 6/23/83, Part II), parents, and other teachers (TI, 5/12/83, p. 12; TI, 5/18/83, p. 5). One teacher went so far as to speculate that Murdock possibly listened into her classroom activities through the office intercom system (TI, 5/12/83, p. 10). In addition, teachers were aware of the reading management chart and student progress folders that Murdock kept in his office, and they felt that they were evaluated on the basis of those records (TI, 5/18/83, p. 6; TI, 6/6/83, p. 13).

Murdock did not examine teachers' lesson plans or student assignments because he felt that such behavior infringed on the autonomy of his classroom teachers and would demonstrate a lack of respect for them. He did not want to dictate to teachers what he felt they should be doing in their classrooms (IOI, 6/23/83, Part II).

Whether he was comfortable in the role or not, it appeared that Murdock had arrived at a means to carry out his evaluation responsibilities. The facts that accumulated seemed to suggest that he was reluctant to intervene in classroom practice, yet one teacher told us that the principal did exert an influence in this area. The secret to his success, she suggested, lay in the manner with which he approached his staff:

> I think he really trusts the teachers. He says, "After all, you are the professionals." (TI, 5/12/83, p. 10)

That manner persuaded most of his staff that he was a fair evaluator and that he did, in fact, have the information he needed to evaluate them. Only one dissenter spoke out, telling us that Murdock did not know what was going on academically in the building and that his visits to classrooms served only to inform Murdock about the general state of discipline in the school (TI, 6/6/83, p. 6).

If the value of teacher evaluation for promoting learning for teachers at Jefferson seems suspect, it may have been offset by the very positive in-service climate in the building. Little (1982) commented on this important aspect of successful schools:

> In . . . successful schools, teachers and administrators [are] more likely to talk together regularly and frequently about the business of instruction . . . , more likely to work together to develop lessons, assignments and materials, and more likely to teach one another about new ideas or practices; this habit of shared work on teaching (a norm of collegiality) stands in contrast to the carefully preserved autonomy that prevail[s] in less successful schools. (p. 40)

Little's words emphasized the value of having school staff members share work on and about teaching under a "norm of collegiality." In this way, teachers learn from each other; ideas acquired through participation in in-service training activities are brought back to colleagues, shared in discussions, and processed for useful incorporation into classroom practice. Facilitating such exchanges of ideas for the improvement of instruction is a key role of the principal. The unique position of the principal in the school organization that permits him or her to facilitate and support the exchange of ideas for the improvement of instruction is a persistent theme in the literature (e.g., Rosenblum & Jastrzab, n.d.; Showers, 1984).

In line with expectations for in-service programs found in successful schools, programs at Jefferson had been initiated by both the principal and individual teachers. We have already mentioned each of the efforts in progress during the year we visited the school: the reading and math management programs begun on Murdock's recommendations and the Stevenson Language Arts Program started by teachers after attending workshops at a university. The generalized excitement about these programs in the school, the ownership shared by staff members, the incorporation of the innovations into the routine business of the school, and the principal's support for them all typified the successful learning environment Murdock had created for teachers. Many teachers commented favorably on Murdock's support of learning opportunities for them (TI, 5/12/83, p. 11; TI, 5/18/83, p. 7). One teacher who was excused 45 minutes early from school once a week to attend a class at the university was especially appreciative of Murdock's willingness to help out. Although Murdock appointed an in-service committee each year that reviewed faculty suggestions for training, it was obvious that professional growth at Jefferson proceeded along more informal channels, flexible ones that were opened whenever something promising came up.

Murdock's activities in the area of staff development--staff evaluation and in-service--were, like his role elsewhere in our story, aimed at creating and maintaining positive conditions for instruction. His expressed reluctance to evaluate staff members stemmed, in part, from a desire to avoid infringing upon the autonomy of his teachers or demeaning their self-respect. And his willingness to support, formally and informally, staff learning opportunities was again not primarily addressed to changing in-class activities but to fostering and promoting those programs that generated excitement among staff members.

Summary: Jefferson's School Ethos

Ray Murdock's overarching goal for Jefferson School was to make the school a "showcase in [the] county and in the state." To achieve this end, he stressed specific social and academic goals. For example, in the social realm, he and his staff emphasized building students' self-esteem, promoting the socializing or "civilizing" of children, and helping children

develop an appreciation for school and learning. In Murdock's view, an important by-product of achieving these goals was to make the school a sanctuary where students could seek shelter from their sometimes unstable home lives.

In the academic realm, the Jefferson staff made the teaching of reading and language skills a priority. This priority reflected the national concern with improving basic skills instruction as well as a realization on the part of teachers that many of the students' parents were illiterate or poorly educated. The Reading Skills Management Program, which was brought to the school by Murdock himself, best demonstrated this concern with reading. The program, which consisted of hundreds of individualized instructional units keyed to a multitude of different skills, was used, in some fashion, by every teacher in the school.

Through his behavior, Murdock actively promoted these social and academic goals. Whether organizing lunchtime ping-pong tournaments, disciplining students, serving french fries in the cafeteria, or displaying Reading Management charts in his own office, Murdock consistently modeled cooperation, responsibility, and self-pride. His infectious enthusiasm spilled over to teachers and students alike. Moreover, because Murdock had selected all but two of Jefferson's 16 experienced teachers, they, too, espoused his beliefs and acted accordingly. The majority of teachers were warm, caring, and humane toward the children and toward each other. Just as Murdock enhanced their self-worth and professional efficacy through his support and communication, the teachers tried to nourish similar traits in their students.

Thus, although Jefferson's surroundings appeared stark and desolate, the school's interior was full of warmth, activity, and color. Cohesiveness, cooperation, and trust characterized the faculty, while animation and respectfulness generally described the students. Murdock also sought to extend this family-like atmosphere beyond the school's walls and into the community. He strongly believed in community involvement and encouraged community participation whenever he could. His ability to bring hundreds of parents to this rural school four or five times a year was described by some observers as almost amazing.

This cohesive social climate set the tone for the instructional organization at the school. Although each teacher had a complete set of textbooks selected by the county adoption committee, Murdock believed in giving his teachers the freedom to adapt or supplement the text with "anything that works." He completely trusted his teachers "to decide what will work to the best advantage for the students." The scarcity of supplementary materials, however, limited teachers' options in this regard and made the content of instruction at Jefferson practically synonymous with textbooks. Further, the teachers relied on the textbooks as the major source of instructional objectives.

Jefferson's social grouping--or class structure--was very traditional. The school had 16 self-contained classrooms, each of one grade level. Again, however, the teachers were given the freedom to organize their classes as they thought best. Therefore, some cross-classroom grouping did occur in order to provide a better instructional context for individual students. Also, Chapter 1 and gifted programs provided instruction to qualified students on a pullout basis.

A number of considerations determined class assignment. Of primary importance was matching teacher and student personalities. Harmonizing student learning styles and teacher instructional styles was the second consideration. Student achievement received the lowest priority--Murdock wanted no classroom in which one teacher "ends up with all the discipline problems or all the gifted students."

For teachers, the organization of the formal program mirrored their instructional styles. That is, instruction at Jefferson was as traditional as the class structure. Characterized by lecture, recitation, and seatwork, the majority of instruction was teacher-directed. The teachers, however, did have Murdock's approval to try new methods. Also tempering the traditional instructional organization was the influence of Murdock's personality. His fairness, openness, and positive regard for others found expression in the behavior of his teachers, even in traditional classroom settings.

Because teachers were so important to Murdock, he considered teacher evaluation to be the most difficult part of his job. He neither wanted to be too subjective nor too objective, and he felt he lacked the necessary time to do the job well. Nevertheless, he seemed to know a great deal about what went on in the school and gathered information about teachers from a variety of sources. Most of the teachers considered him a fair evaluator and appreciated his trust in them. He did not, for example, examine his teachers' lesson plans, because he believed that doing so would demonstrate a lack of respect for them. Similarly, he did not routinely decide on in-service activities for his teachers but appointed an in-service committee of teachers that met and reviewed faculty decisions for training.

In summation, the ethos of Jefferson Elementary School was one of togetherness, cooperation, and mutual support. Through Murdock's leadership and personality and his teachers' sincere efforts, the school succeeded in becoming a "haven" for students--a place where they could feel good about themselves and each other, and about learning and school in general. Further, this atmosphere of security and support was cultivated throughout the year, both schoolwide and in the classroom. In an effort to reward positive behavior and make children feel good about themselves, teachers frequently gave awards to students, such as "Superkid T-shirts" or daily certificates. Every Monday was a schoolwide gum-chewing day, and once a year Jefferson celebrated "Kid's Day," a day when special food (e.g., pizza and chocolate

milk) was served in the cafeteria. But perhaps the best example of the school ethos, and of Murdock's influence, was the school carnival, an annual event designed specifically to give kids a good time. On this day, children, parents, and staff alike got together for fun, games, food, and--a highlight of the carnival--an aerial egg drop, with Murdock piloting his plane over the school. Even so, perhaps the most spectacular event of the carnival--an event which demonstrated Murdock's success at achieving his goals--came at the end of the festivities when the students voluntarily cleaned up the school grounds, leaving the entire area free of litter.

PATTERNS AND PROCESSES IN THE PRINCIPAL'S ROLE AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER

Finding Instructional Leadership in Principals' Routine Actions

We want to remind the reader, after this long descriptive narrative about Ray Murdock and Jefferson Elementary School, that our collaboration with this principal and others began as we sought to understand the principal's role in instructional leadership and management. We turned first to prior research about principals and found a major contradiction: While descriptive studies argued that the work of principals is varied, fragmented, and little concerned with instructional matters (Peterson, 1978; Pitner, 1982; Sproull, 1979), effective-school studies proffered the centrality of principals in the development of potent instructional organizations (Armor et al., 1976; Brookover & Lezotte, 1977; Edmonds, 1979).

Attempting to resolve this enigma, we interviewed dozens of principals and completed an intensive, eight-week pilot study. Based on these preliminary efforts, we strongly suspected that principals could be key agents in the creation of successful instructional settings:

> The intensiveness of the method employed in [our pilot studies] has allowed a very different concept of leadership behavior to emerge. This concept is one that visualizes instructional leadership accruing from the repetition of routine and mundane acts performed in accord with principals' overarching perspectives on schooling.
>
> If such is the case, research procedures must be finely tuned and pervasive enough in the school to reveal those behaviors and trace their effects. A lack of such thorough and field-based procedures may account for the frequent report that principals are not effective instructional leaders or that they do not occupy themselves with instructional matters. (Dwyer, Lee, Rowan, & Bossert, 1983, p. 57)

This statement contained both conceptual and methodological premises that were distinct from those embodied in other studies about school principals.

Conceptually, we began our yearlong studies of principals attuned to the importance of routine activities like the ones we had noted during our pilot work: monitoring, controlling and exchanging information, planning, interacting with students, hiring and training staff, and overseeing building maintenance. We had written about these behaviors:

> These are the routine and mundane acts through which principals can assess the working status of their organizations and the progress of their schools relative to long-term goals. They are the acts which allow principals to alter the course of events midstream: to return aberrant student behavior to acceptable norms; to suggest changes in teaching style or intervene to demonstrate a preferred form of instruction; to develop student, teacher, or community support for programs already underway; to develop an awareness of changes in the organization that must be made in the future. (Dwyer, Lee, Rowan, & Bossert, 1983, p. 54)

The "success" of these actions for instructional management, we wrote, "hinges . . . on the principal's capacity to connect them to the instructional system" (p. 54), for we had found that the principals with whom we worked believed that they could and did influence the instructional systems in their schools.

We also found that each of our principals held a working theory of his or her instructional system--an overarching perspective--that guided his or her actions. Those overarching perspectives were complex constellations of personal experience, community and district "givens," principals' behaviors, and instructional climate and organization variables that offered both direct and circuitous routes along which principals could influence their schools and the experiences their students encountered daily. (Our generalized model is illustrated in Figure 1 in the Foreword.)

The purposes of principals' actions, however, were not always transparent, and the consequences of their activities were not necessarily immediate. In addition, the impact of routine behaviors might be cumulative; we would have to watch the same actions again and again before we could see noticeable change in the instructional systems of our schools. Thus, finding the subtle linkages between principals' actions and instructional outcomes in schools would require the most intensive effort we could mount; we needed to spend as much time as possible in our schools; we needed to question participants in the scenes we

witnessed about their interactions, and about the purposes and outcomes of principals' actions.

We accomplished this intensive examination of the daily work of principals primarily with a combination of observation and interview procedures which we called the shadow and the reflective interview. (See the companion volume, Methodology, for a full description of these procedures.) The intensive application of the full range of our inquiry activities aligned our work with the research tradition variously called educational ethnography, participant observation, or case study by its leading practitioners (e.g., Becker, Greer, Hughes, & Strauss, 1961; Cicourel et al., 1974; L. M. Smith, 1978; Spindler, 1982; Walker, 1932; Wax, Wax, & DuMont, 1964).

We spent over a thousand hours in our 12 schools that yielded approximately 10,000 pages of descriptive material about the work of principals. When we analyzed this body of material to discover simply what principals do, we found that their activities could be broken down into nine categories of principals' routine behaviors:

Goal Setting & Planning: Defining or determining future outcomes. Making decisions about, or formulating means for, achieving those ends.

Monitoring: Reviewing, watching, checking, being present without a formal evaluation intended.

Evaluating: Appraising or judging with regard to persons, programs, material, etc. May include providing feedback.

Communicating: Various forms of verbal exchange, including greeting, informing, counseling, commenting, etc. Also includes forms of nonverbal communication such as physical contacts, gestures, and facial expressions.

Scheduling, Allocating Resources, & Organizing: Making decisions about allocations of time, space, materials, personnel, and energy. Arranging or coordinating projects, programs, or events.

Staffing: Hiring and placement of teaching staff, specialists, and support personnel.

Modeling: Demonstrating teaching techniques or strategies of interaction for teachers, other staff, parents, or students.

Governing: Decision making with regard to policy. Legislating, enforcing policy or rules.

Filling In: Substituting for another staff member (nurse, maintenance person, secretary, teacher) on a temporary basis.

We found that well over 50% of our observations of principals fit the Communicating category and that Monitoring, Scheduling/ Allocating Resources/Organizing, and Governing encompassed most of our remaining observations. Analyzing our interviews with teachers about what principals do produced nearly an identical profile.

Our profiles of what principals <u>do</u> in their schools--their behaviors--illustrate, again, what many others have reported: Principals' activities are typically very short, face-to-face interactions with students, teachers, parents, or other participants in school organizations; their interactions usually occur almost anywhere but in their own offices; and the topics of their interactions change frequently and abruptly. A study by Morris, Crowson, Hurwitz, and Porter-Gehrie (1982), for example, reported that the principal's day is composed of "school monitoring behaviors," "serving as school spokesperson," "serving the school staff internally as a disseminator of information," and "serving the school as both disturbance handler and resource allocator" (p. 689). Another study (Martin & Willower, 1981) likened the principal's work to private sector management after a Mintzberg-type study of the activities of school principals. They, too, found that principals' work is characterized by "variety, brevity, and fragmentation" (p. 79), and that the preponderance (84.8%) of the activities of the principals who participated in their study involved "purely verbal elements" (p. 80).

These researchers concluded from their observations that the principal's role as an instructional leader is relatively minor. Morris et al. stated that "instructional leadership (in terms of classroom observation and teacher supervision) is <u>not</u> the central focus of the principalship" (p. 689), while Martin and Willower reported:

> Perhaps the most widely heralded role of the principal is that of instructional leader, which conjures up images of a task routine dominated by the generation of innovative curricula and novel teaching strategies. The principals in this study spent 17.4% of their time on instructional matters. . . . [T]he majority of the routine education of youngsters that occurred in the schools was clearly the province of the teaching staff. (p. 83)

Another recent study by Newburg and Glatthorn (1983) also concluded that "for the most part principals do not provide instructional leadership" (p. v).

The major problem with these studies, we believe, lies in an overly narrow conception of instructional leadership that is implicitly rational and bureaucratic, despite the fact that principals work in organizations that have been described as "loosely coupled" (Meyer & Rowan, 1978; Weick, 1976) and even "disorderly" (Perrow, 1982). Only those behaviors that were directly and formally concerned with instruction were examined, and researchers acknowledged that they could make little sense of the vast majority of principals' activities. The Morris group wrote:

> Everything seems to blend together in an undifferentiated jumble of activities that are presumably related, however remotely, to the ongoing rhythm and purpose of the larger enterprise. (1982, p. 689)

The major purpose of our study was to untangle that previously "undifferentiated jumble" of principal behaviors to see how the principal influenced instruction through the culture of the school (Firestone & Wilson, 1983) or through the exercise of routine activities (Dwyer, Lee, Rowan, & Bossert, 1983). To take this necessary step, we examined the meanings principals and other participants in the school settings attributed to principals' activities. As both Greenfield (1982) and Bridges (1982) had recommended, we probed for the antecedents and consequences of principals' behaviors.

We considered the entire range of behaviors from the thousands of pages that we had acquired during our yearlong study, looking for the purposes of those acts--the targets of principals' activities. The reflective interviews proved to be the most revealing documents, since they captured insiders' perspectives about the meanings of principals' actions. Again, we produced a list of categories that encompassed all of our episodes. These "targets" or purposes included:

> **Work Structure**: All components related to the task of delivering instruction.
>
> **Staff Relations**: Outcomes concerning the feelings and/or personal needs of individual staff members.
>
> **Student Relations**: Outcomes concerning the feelings, attitudes, or personal needs (academic, social, or psychological) of students.
>
> **Safety & Order**: Features of the physical organization, rules, and procedures of the

school that influence the safety of members and the capacity of members to carry out their work.

Plant & Equipment: Elements of the physical plant such as the building, grounds, audiovisual equipment, office machines, etc.

Community Relations: Outcomes concerning the attitudes and involvement of parents or other community members.

Institutional Relations: Outcomes related to the district office, other schools, or other formal organizations outside the school.

Institutional Ethos: School culture or spirit. May refer to features of the school program or to a "tone" that contributes to the school's unique identity and constitutes shared meaning among members of the school organization.

Combining the nine types of routine behaviors previously discussed with these eight targets or purposes provided a matrix of 72 discrete action cells. Combining behavior with purpose in this manner helped reveal patterns in the previously chaotic impressions of principals' actions. Sometimes these patterns were related to contextual or personal idiosyncrasies in the settings; sometimes they could be attributed to principals' carefully reasoned approaches. But in all instances, we found interesting leadership stories, where principals strived within their limits to set conditions for, or the parameters of, instruction.

In this manner, we believe we have taken a significant step in revealing various ways in which principals can exercise instructional leadership. The remaining section of this case study of Principal Ray Murdock discusses the results of our analysis of his routine behaviors and illustrates the manner in which we believe Murdock led the instructional program at his school.

Murdock's Enactment of Instructional Leadership

We have related the disparate opinions about the role of the principal as instructional leader found in the research literature. Further, we have noted the importance we place on the routine actions of principals--what other researchers have called an "undifferentiated jumble" of activities; we believe that principals can use their routine activities to influence their instructional organizations significantly. In this final section of the Ray Murdock case study, we will delve into that jumble, find an order that is related to the specific context in

which Murdock worked, and disclose a cogent picture of Murdock's role as instructional leader at Jefferson Elementary School.

By introducing Jefferson's setting and actors, portraying a day in the life of Ray Murdock, and describing the school's instructional climate and organization, we presented a plethora of details about Jefferson School. The purpose of our narrative was to give the reader a holistic impression of this setting and principal. Yet, while the narrative does provide the necessary background for our story of instructional leadership, we must now construe the data to illuminate Murdock's role and the impact of his routine actions in that organization.

The result of our sorting hundreds of Murdock's activities into the nine behavior categories established in our analysis (see pages 71-72) is presented in Figure 5 (p. 76), "Distribution of Principal Murdock's Routine Behaviors." This figure graphically illustrates what Murdock did in his school during the time we spent there. In this display, we can see that Murdock's routine behaviors (like every other principal's in our study), were predominately acts of communication (54.5%). One easily recalls from the narrative how often Murdock talked with staff, students, parents, and even cafeteria personnel.

Figure 5 also shows that substantial numbers of Murdock's activities could be described as acts of Monitoring (12.6%); Scheduling, Allocating Resources, and Organizing (10.4%); Governing (8.6%); and Filling In (6.8%). Images of Murdock stopping for brief visits in classrooms or patrolling the cafeteria and playground, making careful decisions about the purchase of everything from curricular programs to buffing pads, h ıding a boy a pail with which to gather stones, and serving food in the lunch line or painting classroom walls can be recalled from the narrative as concrete examples of these types of generalized behaviors. Murdock utilized Modeling (2.7%), Evaluating (2.3%), and Goal Setting (2.3%) relatively little. Staffing (0%) was not a part of Murdock's routine behaviors while we were in the setting, but it is important to note that in previous years he had personally hired most of his teaching staff.

Although this breakdown of Murdock's behaviors highlights his preference for doing school business through face-to-face encounters, it does not reveal the purposes of his activities or the consequences of his acts. The all-important next step in understanding principals' roles is to discover why they do what they do. On pages 73-74, we described eight categories of motives that encompassed the rationales which principals, teachers, and students assigned to the behaviors of the principals that we witnessed in our 12 research settings. These meanings, combined with principals' behaviors, can disclose purposeful actions that were previously masked by the frenetic nature of principals' activities.

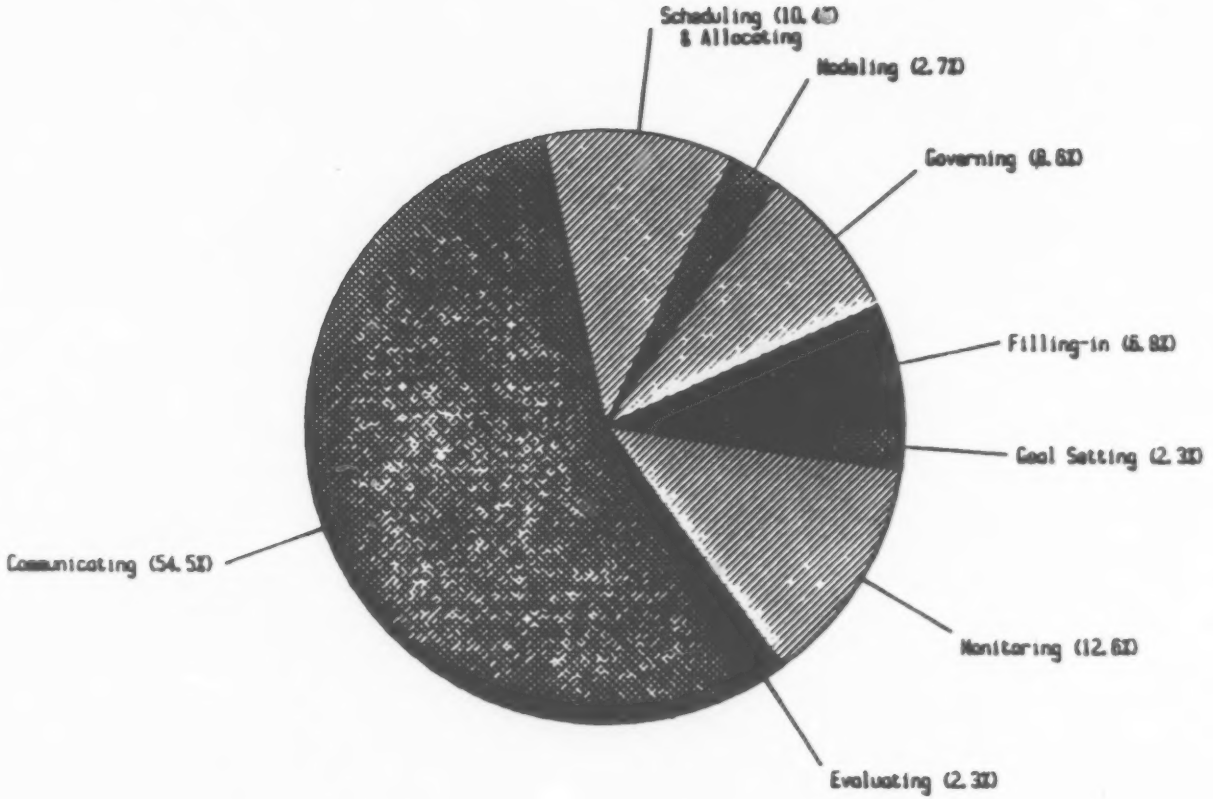

Figure 5: Distribution of Principal Murdock's Routine Behaviors

In Murdock's case, examining in sequence the four largest clusters of his actions at Jefferson reveals the extent to which Murdock focused on the work structure of his school--all those proximal or distal components related to the delivery of instruction. (See Figures 6, 7, 8, and 9 on pages 78, 79, 80, and 81.) The pie charts illustrate that Jefferson's work structure was the primary target of Murdock's most routine behaviors. In fact, 41% of Murdock's activities were aimed at influencing some aspect of the work structure. The same figures indicate that he used a variety of activities to focus on staff relations, student relations, safety and order, and plant and equipment.

Further, if we examine the 72 combinations of principal behaviors and targets in our analytic scheme, we find that three-fourths of Murdock's actions fall into only 10 of those cells. Rank ordered, his most routine actions included:

Communicating/Work Structure (17%)
Communicating/Staff Relations (8%)
Communicating/Student Relations (8%)
Monitoring/Work Structure (7%)
Scheduling, Allocating Resources/Work Structure (7%)
Communicating/Community Relations (6%)
Communicating/Safety and Order (6%)
Communicating/District Relations (5%)
Governing/Safety and Order (4%)
Governing/Work Structure (4%)

If we begin with this analysis of Murdock's most routine actions as principal of Jefferson Elementary School and add to it the facts presented in the narrative about the school's community and district, Murdock's own background and beliefs, the nature of the instructional climate and organization at Jefferson, and Murdock's aspirations for his school and his students, we get a very complete picture--or overarching perspective--of Jefferson Elementary School. The meaning or purpose of Murdock's "jumble" of routine actions also becomes patently clear.

The general model we illustrated in Figure 1 (p. v) can be used to frame an overarching perspective of instructional management at Jefferson. The community and institutional context "boxes" indicate fundamental system "givens," aspects of the Jefferson context that inexorably influenced Murdock but over which he had little control. Important characteristics of the community Jefferson served included its rural locale, the lower middle-class socioeconomic status of its families, and the transiency of its population. Another given was that Herder County School District, of which Jefferson was part, provided important financial and administrative services for its schools and established personnel, discipline, and academic policies. Perhaps the district's most important role was budgetary--saving money for every school in the district by coordinating staff utilization and the purchase of materials.

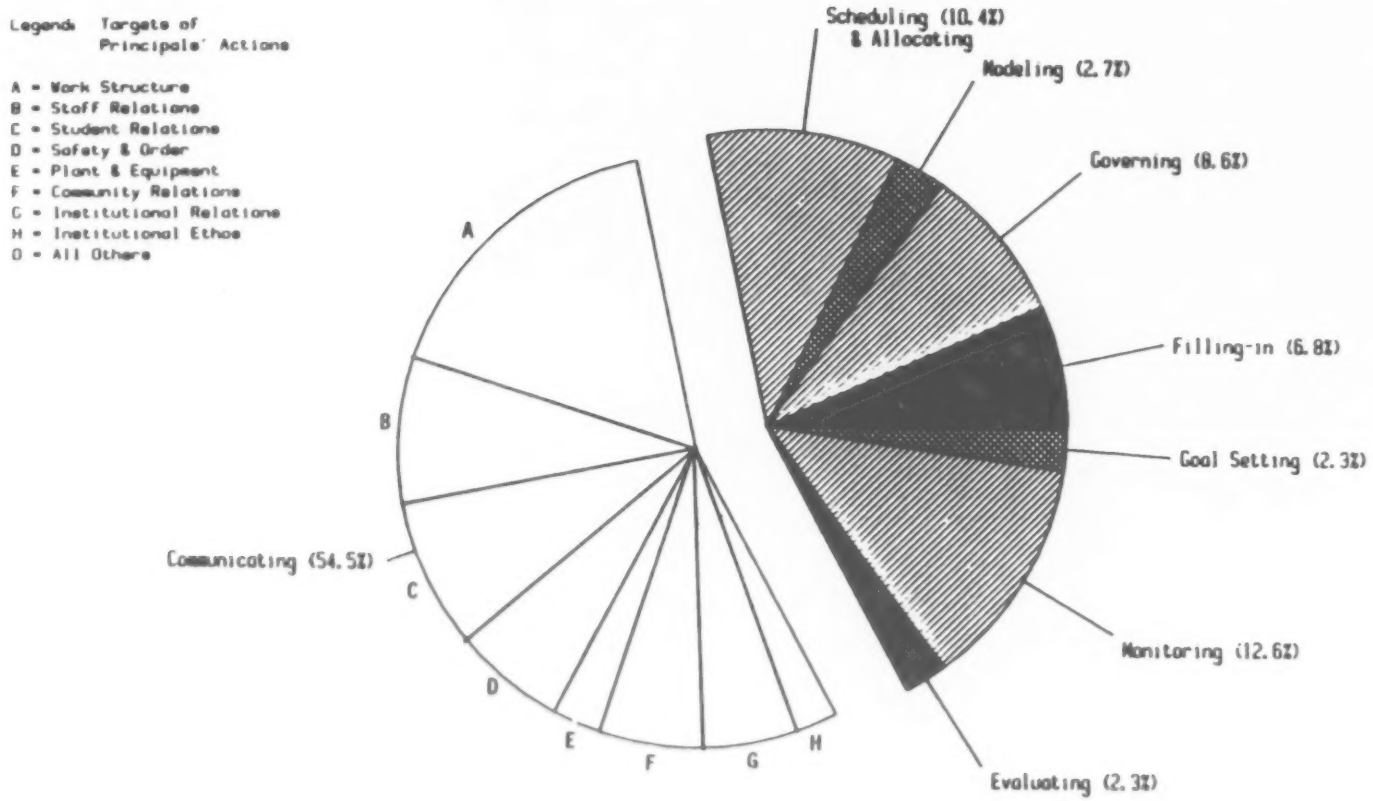

Figure 6: Distribution of Principal Murdock's Routine Actions: Communicating

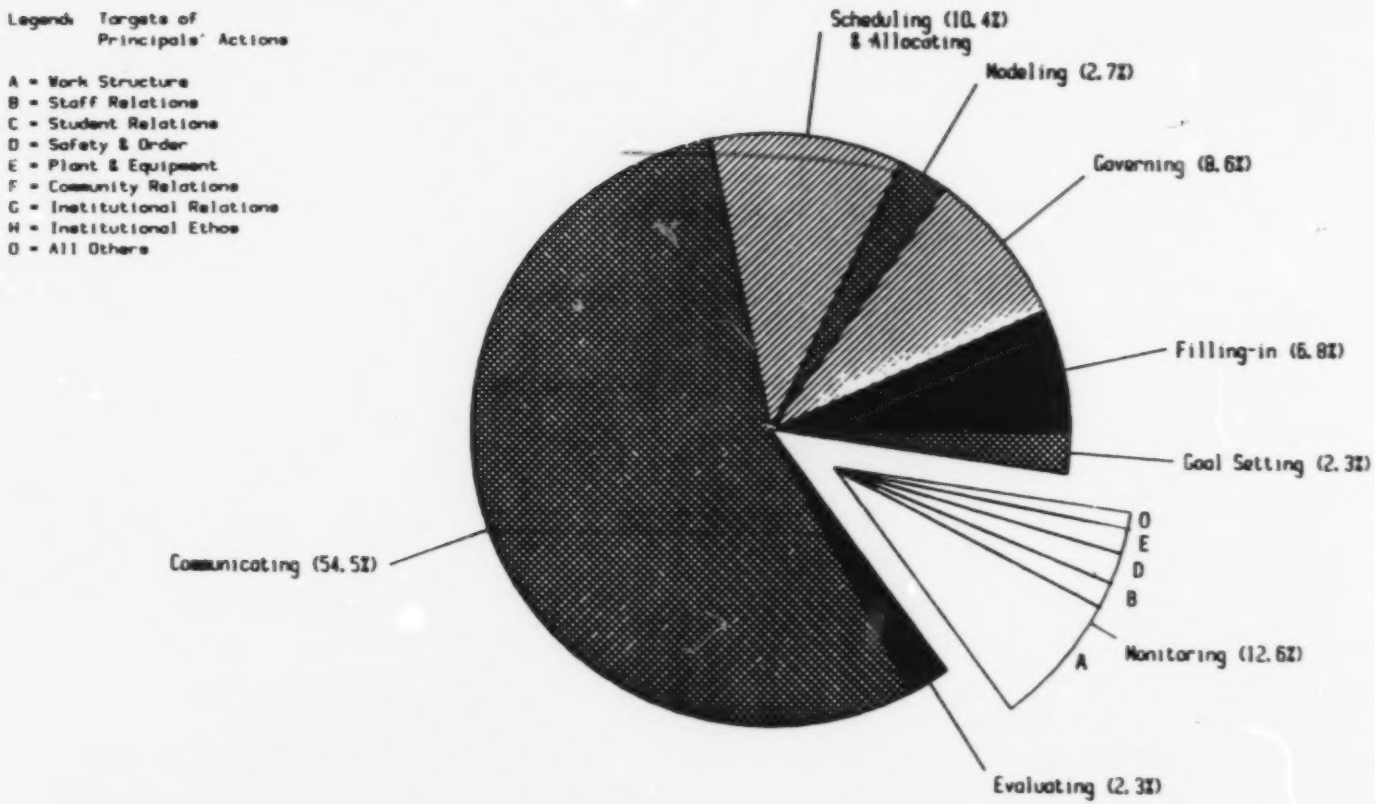

Figure 6: Distribution of Principal Murdock's Routine Actions: Monitoring

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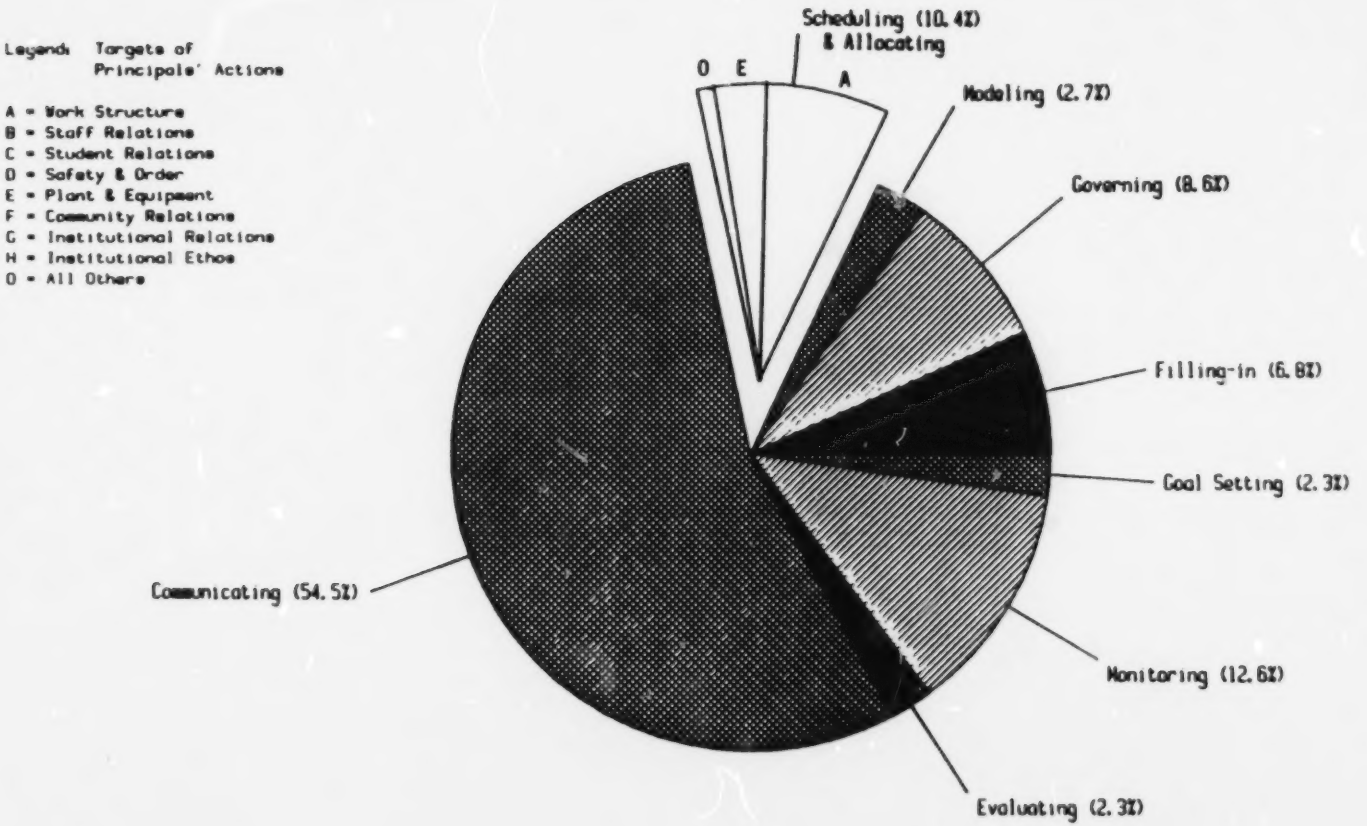

Figure 7: Distribution of Principal Murdock's Routine Actions: Scheduling, Allocating Resources, and Organizing

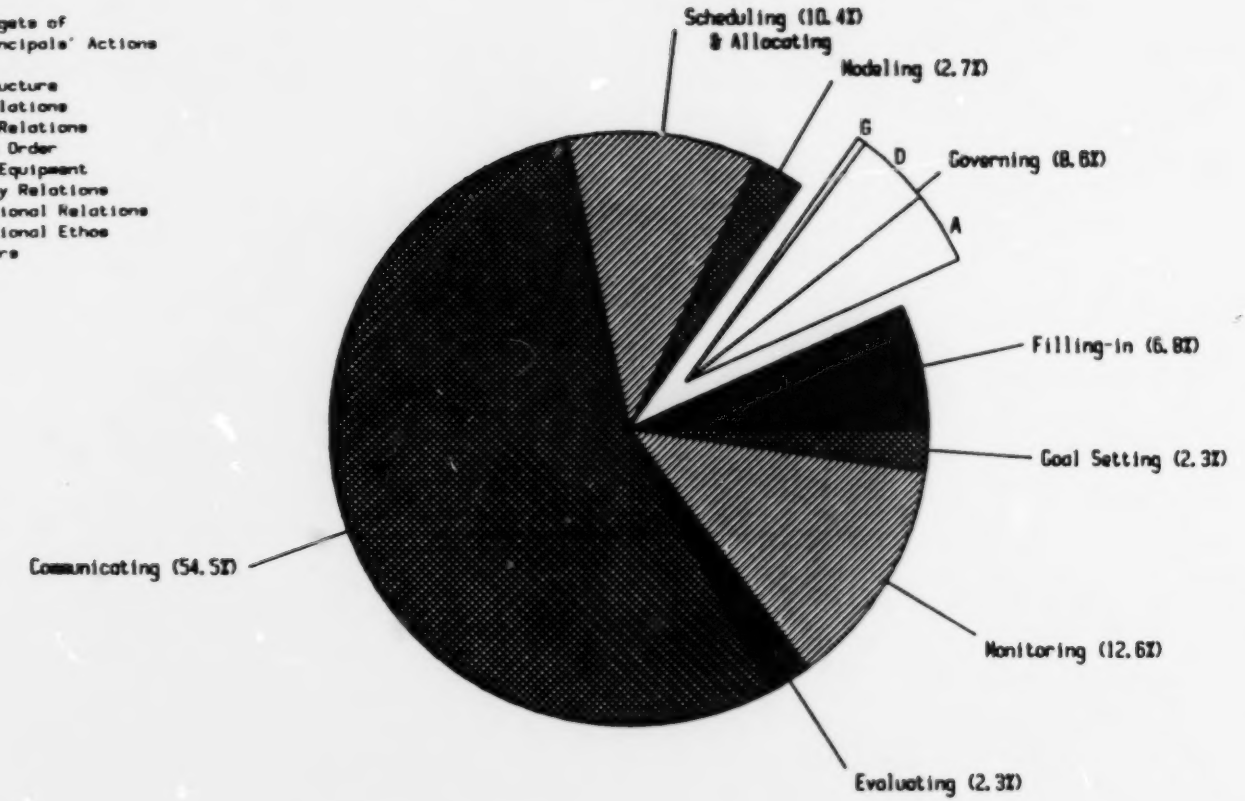

Figure 8: Distribution of Principal Murdock's Routine Actions: Governing

Murdock's own professional experience, philosophy of schooling, and personal history were also important precursors to his actions as Jefferson's principal. In our narrative, we characterized him as a man with more experience in the United States Marine Corps than in classroom teaching (he had no experience teaching in elementary schools), and as a man who had fundamental values and strong beliefs in the rights and abilities of individuals. We also described his ambitions and his desire to make Jefferson an exemplary model for rural elementary schools.

Other "givens" in Jefferson's world, at least as long as Murdock was principal, were the goals he had set for the school and the outcomes that he expected for his students. Murdock's goals were most frequently phrased in terms of the school or its program rather than in terms of its students. For example, he wanted Jefferson to be an exemplar statewide; he wanted the school to be a "haven" for children; he wanted the program to emphasize the basics. Although Murdock did mention the very general goals of helping children to become self-reliant or helping them do their best, he never spoke in terms of specific achievement or grade-level goals for students.

There were clear connections between the nature of Jefferson's community, Murdock's own personal experiences and beliefs, and his expectations for his school. Probably the most important was the way the social aspects of the Bradstone community influenced the goals that Murdock set for the school. He wanted Jefferson to be a happy place, a place where children would want to come, a "haven" for children. While making these statements, he repeatedly noted the hard life many of his students experienced. Many came from broken homes. Their parents often worked in jobs requiring little education or training and, as a result, held tenuous positions in a sliding economy. They were frequently forced to move to find work, and consequently, their children were shuffled around the state and country. Many students would enroll in the school several times in a single year. In addition, Murdock noted that the conservative values of his constituency led them to expect disciplined schools that emphasized the instruction of traditional curricula: reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Jefferson's rural environment and Murdock's own sense of fairness and ambition were both factors in the principal's wish to make Jefferson an exemplary elementary school. He complained about unfair practices at the state level that shunted more educational funds to urban areas than to rural ones. In his view, rural schools were always the poor cousins in the educational enterprise. Compounding this inequity at the state level was the relative paucity of funding for schools in Bradstone; it, too, was a poor community. But it did have pride--an aspect that Murdock capitalized on in his fight to bring resources to his school. In short, Murdock wanted a school that was not only good for "his" kids, but one that proved to the world that rural schools could be sound, effective institutions.

Lastly, our reflections on the givens in the Jefferson system bring us back to examining the effect of Murdock's experiences on his goals. Murdock was a strong individual who was raised on a farm by strict parents and who matured in the Marine Corps--another system of strict codes. He was a competitor in high-school and collegiate athletics and had, in fact, entered college on an athletic scholarship. Years later, he began a ten-year career as an industrial arts teacher in secondary schools where he coached sports teams as well. In many ways, this man might have been out of his element in a small elementary school. But he understood the needs and perspectives of his rural constituency and colleagues; he honed his competitive edge on the challenge of creating an exemplary school; he translated his experiences with athletic and military esprit de corps into welding the Jefferson staff into a cooperative, professional team; and he utilized the self-discipline he had developed over the years to maintain a rigorous and far-ranging professional schedule that accomplished a great deal for his school and advanced his own career. These same personal experiences and Murdock's beliefs coupled with other system givens greatly affected the routine actions that Murdock chose to employ to accomplish his goals.

Establishing the Instructional Climate: As did other principals in our studies, Murdock addressed two aspects of the school framework in imparting his school goals: the instructional climate and the instructional organization. (Again, the reader may wish to refer to the framework on page v.) Most of Murdock's routine actions had direct consequences for shaping a school culture conducive to teaching and learning at Jefferson, i.e., the school's instructional climate. We believe that Murdock emphasized this route because he understood the limitations of his professional training and experiences. He had no technical expertise for the delivery of elementary level reading, writing, arithmetic, or, for that matter, any other elementary curriculum. But he did have a strong sense of what was required to develop teamwork, encourage individual effort, and instill pride in his setting. He believed that these were essential to the educative process.

To recap from the narrative, in our study of Jefferson we found a school with a very positive instructional climate. Describing its facets, we noted the well-kept and well-supplied facilities; we commented on the social curriculum, comprising activities designed to teach students fair play, individual pride and efficacy, and a joy, if not a love, for learning; we developed the "tough and tender" image of Jefferson's disciplinary program--students understood and played by the rules, but they also knew that they were cared for by the school staff. We also discussed the multiple interactions among students, staff, and parents which demonstrated the humane and warm relationships among the members of this learning community.

We see in Murdock's routine actions the keys to the development and maintenance of Jefferson's social milieu.

Foremost were Murdock's pervasive communications activities. As mentioned earlier, they constituted fully 41% of his activities and were directed toward staff, students, parents, district personnel, or anyone else who might influence life at Jefferson. Murdock communicated in order to assess or promote various aspects of Jefferson's structure such as students' and staff members' feelings and lives at both individual and group levels; safety and order in the building; community relations; and relations with the district and the state education department. These interactions were generally short encounters, mostly face-to-face, sometimes by telephone, and least frequently by letter. Murdock placed such a high premium on direct communication that he would often pilot his own plane to the state capitol to talk directly to education policy makers. But Murdock also employed some less direct communication mechanisms: wall posters, his staff manual, or even the reading management program's highly visible record keeping system.

The content of these communications was often, implicitly or explicitly, value laden. To the individual, Murdock communicated the importance of being what you can be, contributing your best to the group, assuming responsibility for your own decisions and actions, and recognizing that others in your group care for you. In his communications about the school, he made very clear his feelings about the importance of education, the short shrift rural schools often got from society, the organization's need to excel and be visible, and the use of teamwork in order to excel. Most often, such value messages supplanted "how to" messages. For example, he would encourage teachers to set clear expectations for student behavior and to state equally clear and fair consequences for infractions, but he allowed them to determine their own rules and develop their own techniques for implementing discipline within their classrooms.

Murdock, of course, did more than talk to improve or maintain aspects of Jefferson's instructional climate. We observed him as he acted more systematically to monitor staff and students and to affect both safety and order and the status of the physical plant. We saw him evaluate order in a classroom and in the lunchroom, and evaluate the building's cleanliness. In the latter instance, he decided improvements were necessary and called in the head janitor to admonish him to do a more thorough job. We watched Murdock govern or directly intervene when teachers felt they needed help with disciplinary situations. But these more direct actions added up to only a small fraction of Murdock's activities around his school.

The point is that Murdock did not have to intervene in these matters very often. This happy, warm, and apparently productive climate was sustained by the strength of Murdock's conversations on, and demonstrations of, his beliefs and values about schools and how people should work together. By keeping these values so much to the fore, he encouraged a normative environment in which coercion was rarely needed. Participants at Jefferson--children

and adults--belonged to the school, enjoyed its nature, and were willing to work to maintain its positive aspects.

The consequences of Murdock's approach to creating and managing an instructional climate were readily visible or readily "felt" at the school. The drastic change in the initial impressions of our field observer after only a few hours in the school provided one kind of evidence. Positive personal reactions to the school were common and tended to strengthen over time. In addition, parents were clearly satisfied with the school, as demonstrated by the unusual strength of the PTA and very high parent turnout at school functions. Also, staff members were happy to remain at Jefferson and hoped that Murdock, too, would remain as principal for as long as possible. Finally, the children were bright and happy at school, despite potential conflicts and disturbances arising from home problems, frequent family moves, and the alienation felt by many from the lower strata of American life. Earlier, we described Jefferson's students as "animated in their play" yet "respectful and attentive during class time."

Murdock's approach had other consequences as well. Jefferson's climate encouraged community support that translated directly into increased resources for the school's social and academic programs. We have indicated how parents turned out in great numbers for fund raising events, nickeling and diming their way through carnival days and art festivals that annually raised hundreds of dollars for the school. We reiterate that all of the school's playground equipment, audiovisual equipment, and display cases for childrens' work had been purchased with such funds.

Parent involvement and satisfaction also translated into a potent reputation for the school and its principal, which proved useful when Murdock approached the school board or district superintendent with special requests for his building. Fresh in the minds of staff while we were at the school were Murdock's successful campaign to implement the new reading and language arts program at the school and his apparent freedom to ignore a new districtwide teacher evaluation program with which he was uncomfortable. Murdock did not rest on this reputation, however. Knowing how important community and central office support was, he bolstered the support he already enjoyed by using routine communication activities: Through newsletters, phone calls, meetings, and informal visits with senior administrators and community members, he shared with others the image of Jefferson's positive instructional climate.

Establishing the Instructional Organization: Murdock's second avenue to the realization of his goals was the development of an effective instructional organization at Jefferson Elementary School (see Figure 1 for our general framework of instructional mangagement). As we indicated in the discussion above, Murdock's influence here was less direct than in the creation of Jefferson's instructional climate, in part because his own technical background in elementary instruction was

limited. Murdock himself would be the first to say that his teachers--not the principal--were the experts.

For this reason, one of Murdock's most critical activities was nonroutine in nature--hiring teachers. One of his staff members said that she thought staffing was Murdock's primary responsibility to the school. Murdock had hired practically all of his teachers. And in many cases, because he had selected his teachers from aides or substitutes who had worked for him previously, he was able to observe performance before hiring. His staff believed that his recruitment and selection activities were among his most effective, pointing to how well they all got along and how much they shared about teaching as evidence for this claim. As mentioned earlier, Murdock's day-to-day team-building activities contributed to staff cohesiveness. To a large extent, however, that cohesion developed easily because Murdock had hired people who already shared his general philosophy. As a result, he needed only to encourage and nurture staff's beliefs and values rather than alter them.

It would not be fair, however, to assume that, other than hiring staff, Murdock had no influence on the instructional organization at Jefferson. Indeed, recall that 41% of his routine actions involved planning, communicating, monitoring, and enforcing policies about the school's work structure. As in the case of instructional climate, most of that activity was communication. And as in his role as climate manager and developer, Murdock acted on the instructional organization by verbalizing or otherwise demonstrating his values in the form of broad academic goals. For example, he supported teaching the basics and assigned preeminence to the teaching of reading. And he communicated to his staff and to key parents the need to prepare children for the world of technology and had begun to subtly lobby for some form of computer instruction in the school.

Some evidence indicated that Murdock occasionally nudged his teachers about their classroom practices. For example, one teacher reported that Murdock had gently told him that he was using too many film strips in his instructional program. However, this kind of activity by Murdock was the distinct exception. He clearly preferred to render opinions, not edicts, about instruction. His introduction of the reading management program into the school appeared to be a direct intervention into the instructional world of his teachers, but even here and despite his apparent monitoring, teachers adapted and utilized the program in any way they saw fit. Similarly, Murdock's support for the use of aligned curriculum or innovations promoted by his staff (like the new language arts program) fell far short of unifying instructional practice at the school; teachers were simply free to use or not use materials as they chose. Murdock's bottom line about curriculum and pedagogy for his teachers was to use "whatever works."

Yet, despite having a great deal of autonomy, Jefferson's teachers used similar classroom practices. The traditional

approach, employing lecture, recitation, and seatwork, was used almost exclusively. The consensus about teaching style was largely due to the fact that Murdock, by arranging to observe teachers' in-classroom practices before hiring them, had selected individuals who fit into the staff. Another factor in creating this agreement about teaching style was that the Jefferson staff shared a common educational background which included pre-service and in-service courses that many of them had taken together.

One apparent anomaly that we observed in our analysis of Murdock's routine actions was the extent to which he monitored instruction at the school. His expressed trust in his staff and his willingness to defer to their expertise seem to stand in direct contradiction to the interest he apparently took in monitoring their instructional practices. Teachers reported his short but frequent "walk-throughs" of their classrooms, and they said they were aware of his frequent conversations with parents and students about what went on in classrooms. In addition, we watched with interest as Murdock examined individual, class, and school records from the reading management program.

We posit two explanations for this inconsistency. Because of the rarity with which Murdock gave teachers constructive feedback about their instructional practices, we doubt that Murdock's monitoring of instruction was meant to influence the form or content of instruction at Jefferson. Rather, we believe that he was gathering information that he could use in conversations with other teachers in the building and with interested parties in the community and district. By observing and conversing, he provided himself with images that he used to render vividly Jefferson's story to his public, to promote his school's effectiveness, and to argue for continued or enhanced interest and support. In addition to employing this strategy for gathering information, Murdock used this method to demonstrate to the entire staff and to the student body his support for individual teachers' work. In short, he was communicating, in a strictly ceremonial fashion, his support for his staff's activities.

Murdock's in-house and out-of-house promotion of his staff, the trust and respect that he verbalized for them, and the freedom he permitted them in the selection of curricula and instructional practices contributed to Jefferson's overall positive climate. His teachers possessed a strong sense of professional efficacy, a professional equality that encouraged openness and sharing. The flip side of this argument is that Murdock's unwillingness to intrude more directly in instruction at Jefferson did result in a loosely coordinated curriculum within grade levels and throughout the school. However, because of Murdock's primary interest in hiring staff who shared a basic educational philosophy, tight coordination was probably unnecessary. Each of Jefferson's classrooms participated in a very consistent educational culture, and it is doubtful that children's experiences varied a great deal from room to room despite the different instructional materials with which they worked. Importantly, this consistency did not result from the

technical efficiency of a bureaucatic organization that sought to insure the quality of children's experiences through highly rationalized and carefully monitored systems of instruction. Rather, the picture of Jefferson that emerged was of an organization managed through an informal and normative system of control.

Conclusion

We have described in great detail the Jefferson Elementary School. We have portrayed its rural setting, underscoring some of the special constraints and opportunities provided by that context. We have discussed Jefferson's patrons--its students and their parents--their nature, needs, and contributions to the school. We wrote about the school's teaching staff, and we presented their very similar approaches to instruction and their similar beliefs about the purposes of schooling. But the central character of this monograph has been Ray Murdock, Jefferson's principal, who was nominated by state education officers as a highly successful instructional leader. We explored his beliefs and experiences, his aspirations for his school, and his routine activities, searching for an understanding of his role as instructional leader and manager.

Through a careful analysis of hundreds of observations of his activities and of interviews with staff and students, we found linkages between Ray Murdock's contextual givens and behaviors and the status of the instructional system at Jefferson. Rather than the instructional bureaucrat suggested by the effective schools research, Murdock emerged as a cultural leader who took every opportunity to promote to his staff and students his beliefs and values about living and learning.

Within the school, the consequence of Murdock's efforts was a cohesive staff that was sensitive to the emotional needs of Jefferson's students and that, for the most part, made Jefferson a happy and productive environment for children. Outside his school, Murdock's routine activities produced an active support system that strengthened the school's program and sustained its growth despite material and personnel shortages throughout the district. Murdock's actions, inside and out, produced a constant flow of information that enabled him to make Jefferson's program responsive to the school's context.

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